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RIDEG ZSÓFIA

## Színház örökké lesz

„Színház mindig volt, és örökké lesz. Az eljövendő ötven-hetven évben különösen nagy szükség lesz rá. Mert valamennyi művészet közül csakis a színház az – ahol a szó szájától szájjig, a tekintet szemtől szemig, a mozdulat kéztől kézig, testtől testig hatol. Nincs szüksége közvetítőre. A színház a világ áttetsző fénye, se Dél, se Észak, se Kelet, se Nyugat – ő maga a fény, a világ négy sarkából árasztja el a világgosság, és bárki számára felismerhető, közelítsen hozzá ellenségesen vagy barátságosan”<sup>\*</sup> – fogalmazott az idei színházi világnapon Anatolij Vasziljev orosz rendező, több is annál, filozófus, a szó legnemesebb értelmében tanító, aki engem mindig is Csontváry *Marokkói tanító* című festményére emlékeztetett. Ő is itt volt az első két MITEM-en, és megosztotta velünk csodálatos tudását. Nála, az ő moszkvai színházában tapasztaltam meg, amit mindig is sejtettem, hogy a színház egy nyitott metafizikai tér, ahol minden megtörténhet: a hang fénné változhat, a test áttetszővé, ahol a színész megszólalásával „felnyithat ezer szót a húsban”, ahogy a másik nagy színházi gondolkodó, Valère Novarina írja, aki szintén a MITEM vendége lesz.

Drámai változásokkal terhes korunknak különösen nagy szüksége van színházra, mert meg kell értenünk, mi történik velünk itt a földön, miért ütődünk egymásnak, mint a vízmolekulák, és hogyan semmisülnek meg egy szempillantás alatt embertársaink, mint letaposott fűszálak. A színház egy eleven kis térben leképezheti a világban zajló folyamatokat, és ha nem is érthetjük meg, de legalább újra meg újra átélhetjük őket, hogy utána jobban eligazodjunk a hétköznapiakban is. Vannak olyan töretlenül fennmaradt archaikus színházi formák, amelyek nagyon régóta közvetítenek életet fenntartó, újra generáló szellemi tartalmakat, ezek megismerése ma különösen fontos. És vannak olyan klasszikus művek (*Iliász*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Macbeth*), amelyekről békésebb időkben nem gondoltuk volna, hogy ilyen közeliak, aktuálisak. Ma különösen átérezhetjük, hogy kortársaink a klasszikusok, akik összehoznak bennünket, a világ legkülönbözőbb pontjairól érkező alkotókat, hogy általuk újra és újra párbeszédbe kerülhessünk, hogy igazán oda tudjunk figyelni egymásra!

<sup>\*</sup> Kozma András fordítása az orosz eredetiből.

CLASSIC REPRINT SERIES

# THE TRAGEDY OF MAN

Dramatic Poem



by  
Imre Madách

Forgotten Books

Madách Imre: Az ember tragédiája, a Forgotten Books angol nyelvű kiadásának borítója, 2013  
Imre Madách: *The Tragedy of Man*, Dramatic Poem, Reprint, London, Forgotten Books, FB &c Ltd., 2013

# The Theatre Will Remain Forever

“The theatre has always been and it will remain forever. And now, in those last fifty or seventy years, it is particularly necessary. Because if you take a look at all the public arts, you can immediately see that only theatre is giving us – a word from mouth to mouth, a glance from eye to eye, a gesture from hand to hand, and from body to body. It does not need any intermediary to work among human beings – it constitutes the most transparent side of light, it does not belong to either south, or north, or east, or west – oh no, it is the essence of light itself, shining from all four corners of the world, immediately recognizable by any person, whether hostile or friendly towards it.”\* This is a description of the theatre by Anatoly Vasiliev, a Russian director who is much more than merely a director, he is also a philosopher and a teacher in the most profound sense of the word, a man who always reminds me of the painting *Teacher from Morocco* by Hungarian painter Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka. Vasiliev was present for the first two MITEM, where he shared his marvelous knowledge and vision with us. At his theatre in Moscow I experienced firsthand something that I had always sensed was true, namely that the theatre is a metaphysical space in which anything can happen: sound can be transformed into light, the body can become transparent, the voice of an actor “can open one-thousand words in the flesh,” as Valère Novarina writes, the other great visionary of the theatre, who will also be one of our guests at MITEM.

In our era, a moment of history beleaguered with dramatic changes, we have particularly strong need of the theatre, for we must arrive at an understanding of what is happening to us, why we are colliding with one another like water molecules, and how our fellow human beings are being destroyed in the space of a second, like grass trampled underfoot. The theatre can provide a mapping, in a small space, of the processes taking place in the world, and even if we fail to understand these processes fully, we can still live through them again and again, enabling us, perhaps, better to orient ourselves in our everyday lives. There are ancient forms of theatre that have survived the centuries unchanged, forms which pass on spiritual messages that are life-sustaining and regenerating. It is particularly important that we recognize these forms and their messages today. And there are classics, like *The Iliad*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Macbeth*, which in more peaceful times we would not have regarded as so close, even imminent. Today we sense with particularly keen insight that the classics are indeed contemporary in their meanings. They bring us together, artists and creators from the most varied and distant points of the globe, and prompt us again and again to interact, converse, and genuinely to pay attention to one another.

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\* The author of the Message of World Theatre Day 2016 is Anatoly Vasiliev. (English translation from Russian: Natalia Isaeva) [www.iti-worldwide.org/worldtheatreday.php](http://www.iti-worldwide.org/worldtheatreday.php)



# “Once We Know One Another, We Need Not Start Everything All Over Again”

Zsolt Szász Talks to Attila Vidnyánszky

*Zsolt Szász (Zs. Sz.): As a former organiser of festivals, I have the question come to me, time and time again, as to why one undertakes a not quite seamless stunt like MITEM. Several times the ongoing festival (of 2015) has reminded me of the probably most memorable one in my life, the Third Theatre Olympics (Russia, Moscow, 2001), and the programme series entitled The Eye – Slanted Scythians View, conducted by Anatoly Vasiliev, within that. I immediately thought that, in contrast to the gigantic event which was meant to represent the new Russia, Vasiliev endeavoured to elevate the local colours and traditions which were truly typical of the empire. Furthermore, he invited Far East ritual theatres from other Asian countries, for example. There was no Hungarian theatre among the official ones representing the European mainstream of the time. The three companies invited from Hungary, comprising the theatre from Beregszász under your direction<sup>1</sup> then, my Hattyúdal ensemble (Swan Song Theatre)<sup>2</sup> and Éva Kanalas’s Ojanna Hangszínház (Ojanna Voice Theatre)<sup>3</sup>, featured in Vasiliev’s programme. To my mind, Vasiliev took such a cultural-political stance, at the same time, by this enterprise, as is worth referring to in retrospect, especially today when the*

<sup>1</sup> The Illyés Gyula Magyar Nemzeti Színház (Gyula Illyés Hungarian National Theatre) in Beregszász, Ukraine, or as it is now called, the Kárpátaljai Megyei Magyar Drámai Színház (County Drama Theatre of Sub-Carpathia), was established by Attila Vidnyánszky in 1992.

<sup>2</sup> The Hattyúdal Színház (Swan Song Theatre) was an alternative theatre ensemble between 1994 and 2007, led by Zsolt Szász.

<sup>3</sup> Éva Kanalas is a folk singer and ethnographer. See her interview in the September issue of *Szenárium* 2015, pp. 81-89, also available on the homepage of the Nemzeti Színház.

question arises as to whether the future will see a Europe of Nations or a United States of Europe on the American analogy.

**Attila Vidnyánszky (A. V.):** Knowing Vasiliev, I think it might rather have been the case that he, taking advantage of organising the Theatre Olympics, managed to get the decision makers to finance his programme separately as the initiation of his newly inaugurated theatre. By the way, he has never made productions which would respond to present-day political issues. He considers theatre, and art in general, at another level. He uses a lot more mature language and a universal dimension to describe the relationship between politics and theatre, even today when he is working in France. It would never occur to him, or to me for that matter, to come up with a piece of theatre about the emergence of migrants on the next day. While of course I am terribly interested in this phenomenon, and I read the news and have an opinion, too. Still, I do not take it up the stage, and there is the daily press to deal with it. Art, I think, is intended to do a lot more than this. If we take the award-winning productions at this year's theatre or film festivals for instance, it will be easy to see what the "trendy" topics are in Europe today. Hungarian criticism also praises these, that is why I cannot do anything with it: even if a director stages a deep human drama, he will be judged by his preoccupation, or the lack of it, with these current issues. So art is sacrificed on the altar of politics. This expectation extorts from creative artists the use of a manner of speech which I consider anti-art. This sort of compulsion for conformity is especially characteristic of the new generation: since their "masters" plant this idea in their mind, most of them will not graduate as freethinking artists, which at least retards the process of finding their own voice.

*Zs. Sz.: Unfortunately this is understandable because they want to succeed at all costs. The emblematic artists of the previous generations had a different attitude. Tadeus Kantor said he believed more in art than in life. And Eugenio Barba articulates that his identity is primarily determined by art and artistic practice, and it even overrides his relation to his mother tongue and sense of national identity. It is also interesting that although they do not belong to the same generation, both of them created their greatest work in the '70s and '80s, that is after the Beats had petered out, which no longer represented the sort of counterculture produced by the so-called great generation of the '60s.*

**A. V.:** If we come to think of it, the Beat Generation let the genie out of the bottle by its own rebellion. Now we are left holding the bag. Eugenio Barba was not exempt from the often contradictory ideologies of the '60s, either. However, the decisive motivation in his case was that he, a young man driven by a commitment to the political left, became a theatre person in Jerzy Grotowski's workshop



Anatoly Vasiliev, director  
(source: [suplimentuldecultura.ro](http://suplimentuldecultura.ro))

in Poland. As revealed in his book, which has, at last, now been published also in Hungarian, it was a most conscious decision on his part to head in the direction of this very Eastern European socialist country.<sup>4</sup>

Zs. Sz.: *The new mass cultural phenomenon of the '60s, namely the spread of rock festivals, gave fresh impetus to international theatre meetings. There are more and more theatre festivals emerging nowadays. Some of them are thematic events, but the one you founded two years ago, MITEM (Madách International Theatre Meeting), is not. The question justly arises after the second festival: what are the philosophy behind and the immediate benefits of this meeting? The invitation of mature directors who mostly work with permanent companies obviously reflects a conscious intention on your part.*

A. V.: Unlike domestic sceptics, I consider Hungarian theatre culture to be on a par with the world's theatre scene – and I dare say that because I have attended enough festivals abroad. With regard to MITEM, I have long-term projects: I would like the successful directors and companies to become returning guests, since this is the only chance to deepen professional dialogue. In Debrecen I already made some efforts at opening up to Europe<sup>5</sup> – primarily by opera. However, these attempts did not always produce the desired results. Drama turned out to be more rewarding: this was the time when cooperation began with Victor Rizhakov and Andrzej Bubień, who have, since then, directed for the Nemzeti Színház, too<sup>6</sup>. But I think MITEM also lends itself to provide an occasion for directors who would be happy to work with our company in the future to make an appearance. I could mention David Doiasvili for example, who, after *Macbeth* at the first MITEM, came to stage Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of last season's most acclaimed productions. Victor Rizhakov took root in the Hungarian milieu earlier in Debrecen: while he left a very deep impression on several actors there, he, too, thought that we had actors with whom it would be worth working together time after time – so I no longer look upon him as a guest director. By the way, we do not work for ourselves only by this festival – it would make me most delighted if other Hungarian theatres also employed the foreign directors we have invited to MITEM. Yet it can also happen that although a high-standard production is created, the actors' souls need months-long tending – in this case the question certainly arises whether the particular director is worth re-inviting. Nevertheless, the same applies within the country, too. Take Sándor Zsótér

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<sup>4</sup> Eugenio Barba: *Hamu és gyémánt országa*. Tanulmányaim Lengyelországban. 26 levél Jerzy Grotowskitól Eugenio Barbának. Fordította: Regős János és Pályi András. Nemzeti Színház Kiskönyvtára, Budapest, 2015. (E. Barba: *The Land of Ashes and Diamonds. My Apprenticeship in Poland. 26 Letters to Eugenio Barba from Jerzy Grotowski*. Translated into Hungarian by János Regős and András Pályi, published by the Nemzeti Színház Kiskönyvtára (Library of the National Theatre).

<sup>5</sup> Attila Vidnyánszky was director of Csokonai Színház (Csokonai Theatre), Debrecen, between 2006 and 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Victor Rizhakov staged Gorky's *The Lower Depths* (*Éjjeli menedékhely*) at the Nemzeti Színház in 2014; Andrzej Bubień staged Gombrowitz's *Operetta* here, in the same year.



Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, National Theatre, 2014, d: David Doiashvili



Henrik Ibsen: *Brand*, National Theatre, 2015, d: Sándor Zsótér



Viktor Ryzhakov during the rehearsal of *The Lower Depths*, 2015 (photos: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

for instance, who was present at this year's MITEM with *Brand* – actors had been happy leaving the rehearsals and the outcome was interesting and convincing, so he will also be given continuous opportunity to work with us.

Zs. V.: *These directors, like yourself, are in their fifties. Your generation, after the great creators who started their career in the '60s, seems to be speaking a different theatrical language.*

A. V.: I believe that it is such a difficult and complex profession that you do not mature before the end of your forties, or rather fifties. No wonder that a director in their forties still counts as young with the Russians. Now the contingent present at MITEM is one of directors who create determinative productions in the outstanding theatres of their own countries. On this basis, a genuine image of contemporary world theatre may be formed. It is another question whether this generation has enough talent in comparison with the previous one, or whether it is less eminent, resourceful or courageous than its predecessors. Surely, we are hunting among younger colleagues as well and this is how Thomas Jolly, the proclaimed enfant terrible in France, appeared on our horizon this year<sup>7</sup>. However, the main intention is to show where the best ones are.

Zs. Sz.: *Have you been invited abroad since you are at the head of the Nemzeti Színház (National Theatre)?*

A. V.: I have always been. But those who know me are aware that I do not hunt for invitations. I have cancelled every invitation over the last nine to ten years. Nonetheless, I may go to Saint Petersburg this time to stage Dostoyevsky because I regard it as a professional challenge with the actors there. I have never been attracted to the idea itself of going to direct at the repertory theatre of any other country, especially in a foreign language. I am not interested in that personally, even if I get paid five times more than at home. Having graduated from the Kyiv National University of Theatre, I obviously have a somewhat strong attachment to Russian culture. Therefore I find it hard to resist if I am invited by Saint

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Jolly made his debut as director of Marivaux's *Harlequin Refined by Love*.

Petersburg to direct Dostoyevsky. Still, I feel that I must work in the service of Hungarian and not foreign theatrical structure with my skill set. This is my first and foremost task.

Zs. Sz.: *I do not think that the burning issues in contemporary theatre have been mentioned yet at the MITEM professional programmes. How do you see that?*

A. V.: You are right. We are just beating around the bush, but in order to engage in a continuous dialogue it is necessary to meet year after year. Though it is interesting to invite new participants each time, we are not going to get deeper unless we have returning directors and companies. It is similar to guest direction. Once we know one another, we need not start everything all over again. Mind you, the system of theatres today is like a huge factory system – whether you think in terms of Europe or the whole world. Masses of performances need to be produced and a lot of directors are required to serve this manufacturing industry. It is not that hard to get into this system once you really want to. And you will certainly find it easier to get in if you accept the rules of what to talk about and in what manner, as well as what messages are worth formulating. But, as I have already said, I cannot identify with the messages which are currently being composed in Europe. Nor with the manner in which productions are made. The three weeks allotted for a guest direction – like in London, for example, where I was last invited – is not even enough to sit down for coffee with the actor twice. And what will inevitably happen then is that the director reaches for his well-established clichés...

Zs. Sz.: *As for the professional programmes Nina Király had the acumen to say that there had been nothing new under the sun for a hundred years: the same questions were still relevant in the theatre as the ones posed by the great theorist-directors at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, like for instance Meyerhold or Stanislavsky.*

A. V.: That is right. Then the '60s came along, when creators, such as Peter Brook, Tadeusz Kantor and primarily Jerzy Grotowski, were trying to reinterpret these axioms. I do not see any ambition of this kind in the new generation, but nor has our generation been characterised by a theoretical interest or an intention to reformulate ideas. We work, make our productions, one after the other. Nowadays there are fashionable trends rather than new concepts stemming from philosophical grounds. Though the time may be ripe just now, when there may be a turning point for basic questions to start carrying more weight again. It never occurred to me before to say anything about what I was doing, however, I have become motivated to do so now.

Zs. Sz.: *At this point the question of theatre training is unavoidable. You yourself are professor at Kaposvári Egyetem (Kaposvár University), therefore you have first-hand experience of the present situation.*

A. V.: We are trying to go against the common European tendency of merging the colours which have characterised the ethnic communities of the particular countries over centuries. I think that we, Hungarians, must make last ditch efforts to insist on our distinctive cultural values. As far as the standard of training



Sarkadi Imre – Fábri Zoltán – Nádasz László: *Merry-Go-Round*, script: Zsuzsa Vincze, d: Attila Vidnyánszky, co-director, choreographer: Zoltán Zsuráfszky, National Theatre, 2015 (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)



Miklós Bánffy: *Flagellum Dei*  
Based on his play: *Great Lord*, National Theatre, d: Attila Vidnyánszky, 2015 (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

is concerned, it seems to me that theatre schools in East-Central Europe are higher-quality and more comprehensive than in the West. The duration of training is longer as well, with courses lasting five years after the addition of an extra one a few years ago, whereas the length of studies over there is only three years or even, in many cases, only two now.

Zs. Sz.: *I am under the impression that both your stagings this year, Körhinta (Merry-Go-Round)<sup>8</sup> and Isten ostora – Flagellum Dei<sup>9</sup>, on Attila, king of the Huns, have had an extremely positive reception from the foreign professional audience at MITEM. The latter one won almost all the important awards at POSZT<sup>10</sup> in June, which had never before happened during the course of your career. On reading the comments following the jury's decision, I could see that no cloudless joy was in store for you.*

A. V.: Yes, this is just about the way I felt. Nevertheless, I was made happy by the audience's unanimously positive spontaneous reaction. At the professional evaluation on the following day, I could see it with my own eyes how embarrassed the dominant, and, to me, hostile voices of the profession became when these video-recorded utterances were played. And the viewers were far from succinct-

<sup>8</sup> Sarkadi, Imre – Fábri, Zoltán – Nádasz, László – Vincze, Zsuzsa: *Merry-Go-Round* (premiere: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015.)

<sup>9</sup> *Flagellum Dei* – adapted from the drama by Miklós Bánffy, *A nagyúr (Great Lord)* (premiere: 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2014.)

<sup>10</sup> POSZT is short for Pécsi Országos Színházi Találkozó (National Theatre Meeting in Pécs), which, as the most significant professional forum for the Hungarian theatre scene, has been organised annually since 2000.

ly articulating their opinion or why they liked what they had seen. Still, it was obvious that they all got emotionally involved in the production. This experience also justifies my belief that what can be readily formulated by means of specific clichés at the intellectual level is not cardinal in the reception of theatre. The spontaneous reactions of the heart and the soul in art have always been more important than rational judgement. There were even periods, for example Romanticism, which considered the heart, and not the brain, as the central organ of human intelligence.

Zs. Sz.: *I think that a couple of years ago Isten ostora would have sparked a furious response if only on account of Attila's non-displaceable cult. However, even your professional opponents can presumably feel by now that this topic is gaining relevance – if I may just allude to the contemporary “migration” which has speeded up over the last months. During the present general crisis of Europe the question is no more what these Hungarians want with this outdated “fairy-tale hero”, but that probably the last fifteen hundred years need rethinking, starting from the fall of the Roman Empire. It has become apparent by now that Attila is not only the mythic hero of Hungarians, but also a key figure of this historical transition, who represented a Euro-Asian model in relation to rule and power, a concept diametrically opposed to the one which Charlemagne later established in Europe and is still in effect today. From this angle, your production is not of a Hungarian perspective really, instead, it problematises the Europe versus Asia dichotomy.*

A. V.: Exactly. However, in hindsight, I must confess that I was tempted by the idea of staging a topicalised version of this Bánffy drama. Then I resolved that it would be a shame to sacrifice this theme on the altar of the swelling waves of current European politics. And I believe I have made the right decision.

## **“Once We Know One Another, We Need Not Start Everything All Over Again”**

Zsolt Szász Interviews Attila Vidnyánszky

It was in the 2015 March-April issue of *Szcenárium* that Attila Vidnyánszky was interviewed apropos of the topic of the roundtable on “National Theatres in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” at the professional programme of MITEM. Now he articulates his ideas on the philosophy and experience of two years’ MITEM, his feeling of antipathy against “trendy” European topics, the ideal of artistic freedom, as well as the different attitudes of the predecessor- and successor generations. He asserts that he considers Hungarian theatre culture to be on a par with the world’s theatre scene. He says he welcomes at MITEM the returning companies and guest performers with whom the Nemzeti Színház (National Theatre) may enter into a lasting partnership. He mentions that European countries, Hungary included, must insist on their distinctive cultural values. Then, in connection with both the professional and audience success of *Isten ostora – Flagellum Dei*, on Attila, king of the Huns, at POSZT (Pécsi Országos Színházi Találkozó – Pécs National Theatre Festival), he formulates his artistic creed this way: “The heart, the spontaneous reaction of the soul in art has always been more important than rational judgement.”



# “Each Generation Must Re-Invent Theatre”

A Roundtable Discussion with Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley\*

**János Regős:** *In the book you write that by the very beginning you and Grotowski were like two moles under the ground, no one knew anything about you, you didn't know anything about theatre but something was born between you there in the railway station restaurant. You talked about everything, about profession, parents, countries where you lived.*

**Eugenio Barba:** The book tells a story which happened such a long time ago that only people of my generation are able to recall, recall the conditions of life at that time. One of the reasons why we read books about theatre art is that we are able to get only very superficial information of the past as we were not living in that historical time. And so, all the new answers escape us. In the early '60s the world was divided into two blocks: the so called socialistic “progressive” block and the capitalist “reactionary” block.



Eugenio Barba (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

They were threatening each other with atomic war. Information about socialist countries was very sparse. If you were a left winged communist person you would hear the tendency that socialists live in a paradise. So information was very sparse. Even the books! If you wanted to know something you had to go to the library to find something in the archives. The flood, the deluge of information that surrounds us today was unimaginable at that time. So, if somebody found a book and

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\* MITEM prologue, 11 April, 2015. Presentation of Eugenio Barba's book *The Land of Ashes and Diamonds*. Participants at the roundtable: Eugenio Barba, Julia Varley, János Regős, András Pályi, Zsolt Szász

this book said something, you went and discussed about this book. This was very normal at that time. It's not exceptional that with Grotowski we were discussing about books. They were discussions about "white stones". We believed in that they take us towards freedom. Because this was what a young person lived for. Freedom of thinking, imagining, and find the time to be able to analyze it. So, when I decided to go to Poland it was because I was left winged, I imagined that in this progressive country which at that moment was blooming with culture: the translations of their authors, their graphic artists, the films, the music, the composers... In the early sixties Poland was really "present" in the cultural/artistic awareness of Europe. So I went there. A few months later I was very disappointed by the socialist world but I was grateful to Poland because I have become immune against ideologies. The problem remained: I was communist because I was against injustice. After Poland I was no longer a communist because injustice



János Regős (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

there continued to exist. How to solve this paradox? The theater was the solution. The theatre for me was always politics by other means. Remember Clausewitz's definition of war: war is an expression of politics by other means. But this politics should not be recognizable out of ideologies. When I met Grotowski he was a member of the Party. Ludwig Flaszen, his closest collaborator was also, everybody was a member of the Party at that time. I was also ready to be a member of the Party if this permitted me to do theatre and con-

tinue it. This is one of the things that is very difficult to understand for somebody who did not live in that country then. One had to be very astute to protect the truth, the aspirations. And it was out of this feeling of injustice that I started to like Grotowski and his actors. Because I found it unjust that he, his actors, and all the people in Poland, all those living in the socialist camp, couldn't get passports. So I started to fight for this theatre. But at that time it was not the theatre for me. I liked these people very much because I found them naive, extremely coherent, and even rather courageous. When I left Poland I wanted to do REAL theatre. I went into all the traditional theatres in Oslo and I couldn't get a job there. So I had to start my own theatre. So, what we are going to see here in three weeks (Odin's performance at MITEM – J. R.) is the result of the canopy of communism, the work of a director rejected from the real traditional theatre, who somehow still learned it that the theatre can be a burning place of freedom. These beautiful words presuppose that we have to work fourteen hours a day like the protruding soldier conquering one meter at a time of the territory. And this meter is one spectator at a time! And you conquer spectators by the quality, by the depth, by transcending yourself in work.

In Vienna in 1985 I conquered two meters, two spectators: one father and one son. The father was called Pál. He appeared there; he was from Budapest, had seen our performances and invited us to Budapest. Since 1985 his son, who is translating me, and the father have made Hungary a member of our family, "Odinland". Of course this applause goes to Pál. I have to tell you something in the end: I wrote this book because I wanted a young person like I was at that time, to help understand Grotowski with the same degree of naivety and disorientation. What in a way disturbs me today about Grotowski, who was totally unknown at that time, is the theological thinking in relation to him. I know it is a small and seemingly technical detail, but it is important to mention his capacity to deal with the authorities. This should be also important to us! I wanted to write treaties on guerrillas. Analyses I was making. The terminology he was using although it was prohibited. Find Marxist definitions. It was impossible to find Marxist definition to that work. This was that I wanted to transmit in a very practical concrete form: how to defend your own means, to start and maintain your theatre.

J. R.: *In the book we read much about the history of your friendship. I have one strong memory in mind about you and Grotowski. It happened in the early '80s in Liege, Belgium. I was there at a festival and the two of you together were holding a lecture. The cafe was packed with people who wanted to hear the two famous masters at one table. I was sitting under the table (there was no other place) where you were talking, and was shocked in way. I had thought that Grotowski and Barba were close friends in a spirit of concord. Instead, I experienced a very sharp debate between you. I, as a naive young man, was very surprised. Your deep friendship was characterized by both controversies and consensuses. All this appears clearly in your book in a stunningly exciting way. How could you fit together the two in your relationship?*

E. B.: When I say that Grotowski is my master it is because he taught me a very important thing. Not to assume what people think you are. Grotowski changed very much after he became famous. He assumed the role of the wise man. Think of the facts: he is only 32 years old, has been doing professional theatre only for 8 years and one day to another he becomes a prophet.

J. R.: *Thanks to you in a way.*

E. B.: Everybody expects him to behave like a prophet and to speak like a prophet and to do performances like a prophet. What did Grotowski do? He decides not to do theatre performances anymore. For me it was very-very important to see, to follow and to understand that the only possibility for remaining very close to what you were when you were young was to remain together with your actors in the same primitive conditions of the beginning, of the origins. And for me Holstebro, this small Danish town which accepted me and my unknown actors in sixty-six, was my very important sanatorium where I can be protected from this effervescent atmosphere which surrounds fame. We discussed everything when we were in Opole. By all of his decisions I asked why he was taking that decision. And he answered me very sincerely. When he became famous I didn't ask

him any more about his decisions. You can ask me why. We inspired and were very close to each other. Because in our flesh, in our body remained the memory of these three years. His theatre in Opole was closed, was shut by the Party in those days. It was because a secretary in a bigger town, in Wroclaw thought “aha, we want to compete with Warsaw in culture” and got the idea to invite Grotowski and his company in Wroclaw. When I tell you that I didn’t ask him anymore it was because I felt that he would not be answering me. He would answer me diplomatically. And I didn’t want it. Therefore I accepted what he was doing.



Eugenio Barba (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

Give me two more minutes yet. I want to speak of Hungary in the name of Grotowski because it was Hungary that paved the way for Grotowski to international fame. In 1962 a Hungarian theatrologist called Ferenc Honti arrived in Opole. He saw Grotowski’s performance and then he said to him ‘Well, this is a very formalist performance. We in Hungary are against these formalist performances. In order to protect our young directors and actors against formalism we have a series of books which describe formalist performances. So I propose that you would write a book about Grotowski so we can protect, safeguard our young artists by reading about that what not to do.’ Grotowski said, ‘of course I would do this’. Anyway it was fantastic: somebody was asking for a book about a totally unknown theatre. Then he came to me: ‘You’ll write the book.’ I’ve never written a book before. But what love makes!(?) I started writing this book, even in French, the language of the troubadours. It was called: *In Search of the Lost Theatre*. I sent it to Ferenc Hont and it was published in Hungary. My mother translated it into Italian. It was also published in Italy. But I had to type and type again the French manuscript because we had just that carbon paper to make copies. It was given to all the people who shaped the face of new contemporary theatre in Europe. So, thanks to Ferenc Hont, people could get a description of what Grotowski was doing.

**Attila Vidnyánszky:** Do we need to reinvent the theatre? Or it is good as it is working now?

E. B.: Each generation must reinvent. Not the theatre in its superficial structure, but in the deeper meaning theatre can have for the individual artist and for the spectator in its community. The theatre is not a value in itself. Theatre is a profession which was founded about five hundred years ago and was a commercial enterprise. Its purpose was entertaining spectators. In the twentieth century a few

strange, bizarre people started speaking about theatre not as a commercial enterprise but an artistic one and they invented a sort of metaphysics of theatre, something that went beyond the entertainment value. They spoke about ethics, about spiritual values, didactic, therapeutic values, etcetera. You know all of them from Stanislavsky to Grotowski. But the problem is that today, in this very moment, throughout the whole planet, there are at least one million performances a day. But most of them are still entertainment. So each generation can accept this or each one must invent a theatre which has a deep meaning for him/her or for other people. I would like to ask you for one minute silence. I've just received from Giuseppe Bonifati (a young Italian actor/director in residence by Odin) a message that Judith Malina /the co-director of The Living Theatre R.J./ died last night. I think that together with Grotowski, Julian Beck and Judith Malina the directors of The Living Theatre were the main creators of what we are today. So I ask one minute silence for ourselves and for the honour of our beginning...

A. V.: We know that at theatre companies that have worked together so long there are controversies, discordances, breakups, deaths... How have you been able to hold this fantastic company together for such a long time?

E. B.: I've been thinking myself about this because in the last ten years I was always asked this question. In the beginning each of us was asked different things and tried to answer them. I think that there are four very important factors we have managed: the main one is that from the very beginning I as a director felt the obligation to give salary to my actors. We were a group having no subsidies so I knew that I should give them a minimum. They should not think about money. The minimum – and, at the same time, I have to demand the maximum. So over these fifty years, our actors have received their salary at the end of the month. There were periods, though, when I couldn't pay. Then I could see at once how a group was ready to disappear. Because when you are thirty-forty years old you have a family, have children – the rules of life dominate in your head. The second factor was that very early, after four-five years, I decided I wanted to keep my actors until I die. This seems very strange for a young director in his thirties. I want to follow them; they want to follow me until we die. I know very well why I am talking about this decision. And once again, it was Grotowski who taught me this. It was when Grotowski decided not to do any more performances and he left all his actors and began working with a group of young people. I thought very much about this. I know that this is the pattern in theatre history. Stanislavsky did the same with his studio. Copeau did the same in Bourgogne. Everybody thinks that Grotowski is my master. It is true and not true at all because I've learned my craft together with my young actors. They have been really teaching me how to become a director with all the errors, experiences, all the new inspirations. And, first of all, how they were able to destroy all the prejudices in me about male actors, female actors. It was very important: go against the nature of theatre, of the profession where relationships are always very short, just a few years and then people separate. This obliged me to do a lot of changes in my way of thinking



From left to right: Zsolt Szász, János Regős, Eugenio Barba, Nóra Durkó, Julia Varley  
(photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

about theatre and directing the group. Some of the actors wanted to leave and I said ‘no, you must remain here within the framework of Nordisk Teatrelaboratorium, not in the Odin Teatret. You can have your own group here with a different name, different identity. You don’t need to identify yourself with the Odin if you don’t want to. But this is the place where you have been working and you have been grown. It belongs to you.’ So this is the second factor. The third factor is that in the very beginning Odin was an amateur theatre and we prepared our performances in a small school room. The only thing we had to invent was how to hang a rope. When I was travelling in Europe to spread information on Grotowski, I met a lot of people and I still kept contact with them, have become a sort of friends. Then they started to invite Odin because the only thing we needed were few benches, a small venue and the home of friends to sleep. So in the very beginning Odin was invited by friends. When we were doing performances these friends became very special spectators saying ‘I want you to come to my town, to my country!’ Most of them were theatre groups. Like your group in Beregovo (in Ukraine, Illyés Gyula Hungarian National Theatre, founded by Attila Vidnyánszky – J. R.) At that time I felt that I belonged to this constellation of people. When they came they said ‘Oh you are very expensive!’ I answer: ‘Yes, of course we need money. But first of all I want to test his/her capacity of making miracles.’ And these people with nothing, with no help from authorities, they could make miracles. They managed to convince theatre directors, traditional theatre directors, festivals to get money to invite us. If one makes the history of ISTA /International School of Theatre Anthropology – J. R./ one would learn that these international sessions which cost two-three hundred euro – were all organized by small groups operating without one cent. This is the power of love and fanati-

cism. So these people which I have to call the “secret”, the people of the Odin. They kept and protected the independence of the Odin. We were not depending on the fashions, on cultural politics, on the market because when we made a production we had fifteen, twenty places to go to where our friends invited us. And this managed our independence. The last five-six years it became very difficult because of the economical crisis in Europe and because of those many people who are now among the angels.

**Julia Varley:** But I want to answer in a different way. Of course, there are many answers. One of them is because we are a theatre laboratory. Eugenio has often used the image of Alexander the Great, of how he would win the battles as for he rode on two horses. So if the enemy went against one he was on the other. And the fact of being a theatre laboratory means to have different activities. For example it meant that one of the actors broke his leg and he can no longer perform that show we were able to start making a film. One of the examples, maybe, can explain a bit more. Once the director, Eugenio got very angry and left. It was during the rehearsal of the production *The Ashes of Brecht*. He was very-very angry. I even saw an axe in his hand and he went out of the room and left the theatre. One really had the feeling that he won't come back. What did we do next morning? We did what we always do. We went into the room to do our training. We had something, an activity which meant that we have to meet again. And because we, actors continued to do what was our work I think we had the strength to call Eugenio back. And then we finished the performance.

J. R.: *I think the people here are very curious why Eugenio was so angry.*

E. B.: I got angry with one of the founders of our theatre who behaved very irresponsible to my way. It happens sometimes that I don't control myself. You may all know what it is to work every day, it is a routine, and it is not a sort of ecstasy. It is like fishing pearls. You are suffocating under the water and most of the times you get empty shells. After many years of work you need that everybody is aware that he/she has to contribute with something to what is going on there. Otherwise it is just a routine, just entropy, just sleeping. And if one of the actors forgets it for a moment then I really get angry. This was the case in that moment.

J. R.: *Julia said that it happened only once in your fifty years' history. Am I right?*

J. V.: It happened once that I saw Eugenio leaving us and not coming back. But then he also did leave another time.

J. R.: *The reason was the same?*



Julia Varley  
(photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

J. V.: No. One of the other answers is that a theatre group always confront constrictions, difficulties that help us change. So we never rely on what we know but we always have to find something which we need to discover. And one time what Eugenio did, he left the group for one year. He left with the great intention of giving to the younger generation the power of decision. I belonged to the younger generation at that time. He left saying that the younger generation shall destroy the museum and create something new. So we had a terrible year trying to keep together the actors and doing the performances and then Eugenio came back and he gave the responsibility of the theatre to the eldest actor. So, all the younger generation had to take that. The other answer is that we always respect the work. The space, the room where we work ...when we close the door ... what is private problem or conflict must be left outside. What we know is that we have to protect the work that we do together. It means that each of us has to give the best. The Odin Teatret is the only place I know that would demand the best of me every day. And I think that is one of the reasons why the actors are still there despite the fact that Eugenio does get angry and speaks a lot.

### **"Each Generation Must Re-Invent Theatre."**

#### A Roundtable Discussion with Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley

The presentation of Eugenio Barba's book *The Land of Ashes and Diamonds* took place at the Nemzeti Színház (National Theatre) as a prologue to MITEM on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2015. The participants at the accompanying roundtable were Eugenio Barba, the leader of Odin Theatre; Julia Varley, actress at Odin; András Pályi, peer-reviewer of the above volume; János Regős and Zsolt Szász as moderators and Nóra Durkó as interpreter. The present publication is composed of two extracts from the roundtable when E. Barba and J. Varley – in answering questions by János Regős and Attila Vidnyánszky, the director of the National Theatre sitting among the audience – expounded their views on the following topics: What did the freedom of thought and imagination mean to the generation of artists embarking on their career in the 1960s in Eastern and Western Europe? To what extent were the normative theatres of the time permeated by politics? Did J. Grotowski have a decisive role to play in E. Barba's becoming a director and in the formation of the artistic creed of the theatre which

E. Barba founded? How did the Odin continue to exist under the direction of E. Barba over fifty years? When and how did the relationship between this famous theatre laboratory in Holstebro and Hungarian theatrical life, theatre professionals, start and what makes it important even today? (This publication has relevance also because Odin and the National Theatre are preparing for a close partnership within the framework of a new EU project).



# One Generation, Two Countries, Three Emblematic Actors

A Dialogue With Actors Dorottya Udvaros,  
Éveline Didi and François Chattot

(Moderator: Jean-Pierre Thibaudat; Hosted by Zsófia Rideg)\*



Jean-Pierre Thibaudat  
(photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

Jean-Pierre Thibaudat: *We are sitting with three actors, two countries, Hungary and France, and one generation of actors (with roughly one or two year's gap) are involved. The question I would like to raise is what development these three actors, who all started in the 1980-s, have experienced in their professional careers. Times have been marching on, the countries have been going through changes, have you felt any either negative or positive changes as actors? Now I do not mean acting on stage, but I strictly mean acting as a profession, moreover, I am even more curious about how an actor can adapt to what is going on in a theatre both in Hungary and France.*

**François Chattot:** In France except for the Comédie Française companies are rarely found; actually the National Theatre of Strasbourg has one, however, it is not operating steadily, sometimes

it is quite numerous, sometimes small, not always significant, but it has the potential. There are a few smaller troupes, though, some ghost troupes, and the young, who work collectively. Alternately, there is the system of temporary or occasional employment, which is referred to as the system of “intermittence” (I am not sure if such a horrible term could be properly rendered into Hungarian). This system gives an opportunity to active actors to accumulate a certain number of working hours or get a few stamps after the performances. So we are talking about monthly payment, which means a so-called unemployment benefit for the actors enabling them to make ends meet between the performances, or they can at least wait with a peace

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\* This program was held on April 15th, 2015 in the Kaszás Attila Stage of National Theatre. The full text of the conversation appeared in *Szenárium* (October 1915, pp. 4–25). Here it is presented in abbreviated form in English.

of mind until the phone rings again. This system has been prevailing for a long time, and obviously has some advantages as well as some catastrophic disadvantages, as it may lead to substantial disproportions, especially if we take into consideration that the big radios or other great institutions – now I am trying to simplify this issue- may wish to take advantage of this system. Many journalists, who for instance work as full-timers for a radio channel, such as the France Culture are registered as temporary actors, and they are not even making a secret of it. Thus this system has its aberrations and is unstable in several aspects, and even if it is under constant supervision, at the same time it offers a sort of employment. Nevertheless, it also creates a completely absurd situation: although it facilitates performances, however, actors are paid no salaries for the rehearsals. They are paid merely unemployment benefits for the periods of rehearsals but they only receive proper salaries from the theatre or troupe they are temporarily employed by when they actually play. So the French situation could be summarised this way, as a result of which, even if the whole operation is not so smooth, but there are at least some new productions. The other side



François Chattot  
(photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

of the coin, where I believe there have been some substantial changes, is the question of the actors' status.

(...) What status, political role does an actor have as a civic person, and also what is the function of a theatre in such a civic environment? (...) An actor is merely there in order to become an interpreter of a play by Shakespeare, Molière, Corneille or Beckett, can this be regarded as his unique function or he is also there as a civic person, who is expected to make some kind of commitment? For instance is he aware of the crisis that the European economy is going through right now, which was labelled as formidable by Viviane Forester in the economic series (*L'horreur économique, La promesse du pire*) that she published before her death? After the

economic horror we cannot expect the future to be rosy, on the contrary, it is becoming rather worse and worse. So I am just wondering how an actor's status relates to it, whether it has changed since we started. Compared with the 70s and 80s (...) is it purely regarded as commitment to art which considers the actor a citizen, and itself as a dialogue between a citizen and an actor, perhaps there is an even bigger gap between him and the theatre which is free from such aspirations. (...) Jean-Louis has a saying that I like very much: "in our profession we are expected to dance even if we are unhappy." Which means that even when we experience pain or horror in the world our obligation is to turn the ultimate disaster into a disaster-like anger. It is our obligation to share our own power and energy with the audience. It may sound like common sense as even Mejerhold talks

about it: our task is not just to share our thoughts or way of thinking with the audience since they have them before they actually enter the theatre, we are not needed for such a purpose. Why they need us is to charge their batteries in order that they may leave the theatre reinvigorated. The *Viellons et harmonions nous en pensée* does exactly the same: gives energy.

J-P. T.: *Dorottya, have you (...) experienced any development in your profession since you started or you feel that it is still the same as it was thirty years ago? At the same time you could perhaps also tell us what you think of François' conclusion: is it truly the actor's obligation to give energy and hope –or even hopelessness- to the audience?*

**Dorottya Udvaros:** I started my career in acting at the end of the 70s, “in the soft and warm nest of communism” as Péter Esterházy says it in his *Termelési regény* (*Novel of Production*). At the beginning of my career I started to work in a quite well-functioning system of theatres. In our country there were a lot of theatres and still are. Actually several theatres in the country are called national theatres (Eg. in Miskolc, Pécs, etc.). There are plenty of theatres in Budapest as well.



Dorottya Udvaros  
(photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

There was a very interesting situation in the 1980s when the cultural management of the country still had a say about what kinds of shows could be staged or which plays could be picked. For instance the *The Three Sisters* is a good example, and this is how we first met Jean-Pierre. Originally Tamás Ascher had intended to stage a play by Petrushevs-kaya, which our theatre was not allowed to play by Moscow. Nevertheless Ascher insisted: “OK, then let’s look for an analogy!” And this is how the original play by Petrushevs-kaya was turned into (...) a very fascinating adaptation of *The Three Sisters*. It was quite obvious that if the Soviet Army appears on stage at the end of *The Three Sisters* (...) it would be clear to everybody what was meant. And indeed, it was clear (...).

And the most amazing experience was that even a classical piece could be adapted (...) and through this adaptation we could communicate everything about our world, our country, as well as our situation. And nobody tried to prevent the Soviet Army from entering the scene at the end of the performance. So this era could really be described as very soft communism: although there was some sort of censorship, however, our operations were supported. Directors working for Katona József Theatre almost always staged and made us rehearse plays that they were interested in (...). In a few years we were allowed to stage even the play by Petrushevs-kaya. While I was listening to you (i.e. François Chattot) I started to feel quite uneasy. I believe that we were in an almost privileged situation in this respect. I can say that 90% of Hungarian actors

had an amazing job security as they belonged to one of the theatres somewhere. – The establishment of Katona József Theatre was an absolutely exceptional moment in the history of Hungarian theatres, as the art management of the country, which actually consisted of party members, said: “Here are these two talented young men, Gábor Székely and Gábor Zsámbéki, who have already set up theatres in both Szolnok and Kaposvár that have become famous in the whole country. Let’s give them a completely empty building in the city centre and the right to contract anybody they wish to work with in their company.” Such a thing had not happened before, has not happened ever since and I am afraid it will never ever happen again any more. What I had experienced at the beginning of my career was virtually a smooth flight experience. I do not really know how often Gábor Székely, who as a theatre director was obliged to be a party member, had to make appointments with comrades in the ministry regards to what we were permitted to play or not. At the same time what I am fully aware of is that in the theatre we had an amazing liberty to approaching basically anything and I never felt that there was anything that could prevent us from expressing our opinions in a given play even if it was a contemporary and not a classical piece. Ever since I have been fully devoted to commitment to being a full-time member of a company as this is what I have been used to and what I have benefitted from the most. In addition, I owe a lot to my masters namely Gábor Székely, Gábor Zsámbéki and Yuri Petrovich Lyubimov, founder of the Taganka Theatre in Moscow. It was the result of so many years’ of co-operation that the company had become such a mature and creative community, how the actors’ careers had been evolving within this ensemble, what roles the actors had been given in order to develop a rewarding career. So I must say that this period was really idyllic and wonderful for me. (...) And then the political system changed. By that time I had become a mature actress, and thought that my career would be sky-rocketing even more amazingly. However, what I had to experience was that even if nobody interfered any longer with what should be shown on stage, theatrical performances were subsidised to a lesser extent. To be sincere a theatre costs a lot of money: to employ and pay a certain number of actors even if they do not rehearse for half a year, it requires a good deal of money. But as we have been able to see in the past 50-100 or rather in the past 50 years, all the great theatrical workshops starting with Mnouchkine have sprung to existence by working together for many-many years while looking for newer and newer expressions to communicate their messages. This does not necessarily mean that temporary formations do not come up with wonderful ideas, and it is also amazing when a person can break free from the world that he has been used to living in, from his very well-protected comfort zone – it is like breaking up a walnut-, and suddenly faces completely different impulses. I have always enjoyed when I have the opportunity to act together with another company as a guest actor, as it always boosts my energy. I had been working for Katona József Theatre for thirteen years, and the reason why I left was (...) not because I felt that something had become tired in me: I just felt that I should find new ways as

the freshness and the feverish craze of first love had calmed down. And I did the right thing because in the following year I met and worked with Anatoly Vasiliev. When I had the opportunity to dance and sing a real musical at Madách Theatre in Budapest I also gathered a lot of amazing experience. When Gábor Székely had set up a new company at the Új Theatre I rushed there without any delay to get a contract. Then there was a quaint twist even after the changes in the political system when the local government said that they would not be able to fund another art theatre. The Katona was approved of staying, but Gábor Székely, who has been one of the most talented directors in the history of Hungarian theatres, was given the sack. Ever since I have been looking forward to the opportunity to be given such a great chance to work with such great conditions. If an actor is contracted as a full-time member of a theatre in Hungary it is a great relief as they should not really worry about how to make ends meet. I do know that my directors and the managers of the theatres are continuously thinking about the roles that I could be allotted. After all I keep my fingers crossed and hope that this situation will not change substantially.

J-P. T.: *My impression is as if – paradoxically – you were a little bit more passive compared with the years spent in Katona, when, as you put it too, you were experimenting with a great number of things. Then both you and Gábor Székely seemed to be fully committed to the company, while now you would rather belong to a theatre than an institution. Am I right?*

D. U.: I used to be very active when I joined Gábor Székely in Új Theatre as a brand new company was being forged then. The main reason why I left was again a new theatre called Bárka Theatre. So I left Székely to take part in the formulation of a brand new troupe which consisted of mostly youngsters and to support the initiative entirely as an actress as well as a human being that a few dramaturges, designers, directors and a few actors could get together in a deserted riding sta-



Dorottya Udvaros, François Chattot and Évelyne Didi (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

ble. Everybody was younger than me. And then a bit more liberal work started, which was quite different from the traditional theatre. At the same time I would like to emphasise that it was still funded by the local government. There was a play that we were rehearsing for half a year and who I am very proud of is István Tasnádi. He started to function there as a playwright, as we were rehearsing the play for half a year which he was writing. This was a really ethereal thing since the company, the writer, the director were simultaneously formulating the same raw material, and all that he came up with at his desk he could then watch it during rehearsal, and feel all of our reflexions and benefit from all of our ideas. It was a fascinating project. For me it was bitterly disappointing how Gábor Székely's Új Színház was terminated, I regard it as the first moment of my coming-of-age experience, even if I was a quite mature woman then, however, in reality I was rather a child. This was the first shock: the fact that it could be said to a Gábor Székely, that the theatre that he was creating was not needed any longer. Then it was followed by another shock in Bárka Theatre, where I spent five years, and which to a certain extent had also turned out to be a fiasco as eventually we were unable to carry on with the kind of work that we had joined our forces for. Perhaps you sense it well that by today I have become really more passive than I used to be: on one hand because I have become much older, on the other hand, because these experiences have made me more precautious, and I am not so hot-tempered any more. I believe that a few of my actor friends can still get together, at home in our dining room, and we can still stage something very exciting, we can even invite our friends, twenty or thirty of whom may be happy to watch our show, and this is also a wonderful thing. However, since the fall of the communist regime there has been a continuous search for the right thing in our profession. How can an artist find his place in a situation in which he is told that he is free to do whatever he wants but at the same time he should take care of the financial background? In my opinion it is not my responsibility to fund my operations, or at least this is not what I have been prepared for. I am not acquainted with this. And I am not really good at it, I have no idea how it should be done. If I come up with something, should I go from door to door to all sorts of sponsors to beg them for funds? And what are the sponsors interested in? They would only be concerned to sponsor a production that is attractive to the masses so that the money that they are investing could have a great return or if they can display their logos at the bottom of the posters. Sponsors are reluctant to spend their money on a few actors' experimenting with something that only a thirty odd people are interested in viewing. (...) Our existence in Hungary is also becoming more and more uncertain: recently there has been a whole class of school leavers at the university whose members were unable to get a single contract anywhere. It was unimaginable when I graduated: it was guaranteed that after graduation somewhere we were all offered a contract. (...)

J-P. T.: *Évelyne Didi has a lot in common with Dorotya as she used to be a member of the National Theatre of Strasbourg. When Dorotya was talking about disappointment and failure in connection with the Bárka Theatre I believe it is very important to*

mention that a failure may have a fertilisation effect. When it comes to your professional experience how do you relate to those years that you have spent with a company, are they logical or rather disintegrated parts of your career?

**Évelyne Didi:** The “Strasbourg adventure” was actually the last adventure of the beginning of my career, the end of my “first life in the theatre”. If my task is to talk about my professional career, and I am expected to draw a conclusion in the end, then I must speak about how it really began. And it truly began in a tiny town in the centre of France, which was very dark and very poor, but there was a radiant theatre person called Jean Dasté, who reinvented theatrical experience for local people after the devastation of the war. I commenced to work in this small and dark town beside a dad who was the kind of artist who was unable to work alone but insisted on being surrounded by his friends, thus even without ever saying a word about this working method he showed me that he needed the other’s company for his creative activity, and indeed, he showed me the basic need for company. So this was the very beginning of the beginning. I was only seventeen years old then, a real baby, when the Théâtre éclaté was taking shape in Annecy-ban, where I could have a bit better understanding of what working within a theatre really means. However, I must confess, that in the meantime and since the very beginning I had not had the faintest idea what I was doing, they were not really conscious efforts. I just did it from day to day, while the work was proceeding and creating its own story. It did not have a story then, just later. What led me to the National Theatre of Strasbourg was the dissolution of this very first theatrical ensemble or collective enterprise. We broke up respectfully, simply because we had been working so much and had become exhausted, therefore we had decided to bring it to a close in order to take a breath of fresh air, take a stroll, and wait and see what happened. And in this “wait-and-see” situation did a person arrive, who is very important to me, he is Klaus Michael Grüber, who always said, that a “theatre is created out of tears”. At that time I was twenty-two years of age, still a baby, and there was no problem with the theatre, it was rather the fact that I had been gathering more and more experience, as I had heard and seen more, I had become more and more familiar with the theatres in the country, it was the first time for me as a country girl that I had been to Paris. The title of the play was *Faust – Salpêtrière* and it meant so much to me. It was an average story about an extraordinary person who was talking about poetry and it was about Faust, and the audience developed a very strange attitude to the whole thing. This performance was hated by almost everybody.



Évelyne Didi  
(photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

J. P. T.: *I belonged to that majority too. At that time I was working with somebody who later became the director of Comédie Française and we had a great number of arguments, more precisely we were killing each other over arguments about this piece. I loved the performance and regarded it as a significant novelty of the period in the history of the French theatre, which profoundly upset our approaches to theatre. On the contrary, he considered it snobbish. And this person became the director of Comédie Française later.*

É. D.: What I intended to point out with this is that such an encounter like mine with Grüber, or several others that were later awaiting for me with extraordinary people meant my real education, and marked the beginning of my career in acting. Working in a theatre and becoming an actor is possible in such ways as well, as after such experiences certain things got imprinted in my personality and they have been living in me ever since. The National Theatre of Strasbourg and the appointment of Jean-Pierre Vincent were such quaint things just as you said. There was a rightist culture minister who had the brilliant idea of appointing a young, thirty-year old director to a great theatre. In those times we were thinking about it a lot, furthermore, we wished – especially me – to ourselves that we were born in a country where the censorship was so strong that it could make it clear to everybody what they were supposed to fight against since it is very difficult to clearly define ourselves if we have to exert censorship control over ourselves. However, Strasbourg did not only mean one theatre for me but also the city, how we lived our life there, how we created our own environment there. I felt something very similar even in Annecy. We were not simply creating a theatre there, but we were creating it there and for those people. We were living in Strasbourg for eight to nine years. And as you put it, it was a very strange relationship with Vincent and Engel for eight or nine years, I have never seen people of such different characters working together under the same roof. Yet, we actors could also have a say in who could play with us. There were not many of us, perhaps just a dozen of actors. The Theatre of Strasbourg was the imitation of Schaubühne to a certain extent, while I do not quite agree with this. We followed their work, also travelled a lot and were gathering information regarding the repertoires of other theatres, and indeed, we liked to glance at them. The reason why this ended is because when Jean-Pierre was invited to the Comédie Française to head a great company, he actually thought he could merge the two. He imagined merging our company into the the company of Comédie, but it did not work out, it was a mission impossible. However, he still attempted to do so, and this period was really shocking for me. What I had to confront myself is that I had no idea about what to do once I did not belong to a company. It also crossed my mind that I should leave the theatre, and to tell you the truth I still cannot imagine how one can work without belonging to a kind of drama group. While I spent most of my time not as a member of a company. These days I have been a lonely actor, actually for a long time. If this time seems to be a bit shorter, it is due to the fact that even after such a break there has always been somebody in my way or I have been in somebody else's way from whom I have received some tasks and thanks to whom

I could get acquainted with something new. It felt like as if I had just packed all my belongings and taken the road of theatres. This is when I bumped into Bob Wilson who asked me to play and thanks to him, I stood straight for a year, for a whole year (he laughs). After this, thanks to Bob Wilson I met another wonderful person, who was writing backwards, and who is called Heiner Müllernek<sup>2</sup>. They had a completely different country and a completely different scenery. So there were these men, actually rather men than women, among the others Matthias Langhoff or Kaurismäky, and ever since these people have become something like the countries, theatres or drama groups who ever belong to me. (...) I am a lonely actor, lonely with such artists who have made it possible for me to prolong my existence as an actor. In the end I do not even have an idea what this profession means these days. What I know for sure is that I am capable of staying alone and it is impossible to proceed with anything if one is fully aware of a looming disaster. I at least need a little ignorance to carry on in such a situation (...)

**Zsófia Rideg:** The French theatre is believed to be very intellectual by Hungarians. I saw a documentary in the Theatre of Strasbourg, in which André Wilms was talking about how different it used to be and he said that the plays used to be much more physical. What is your opinion about this?

É. D.: (...) My impression is that there are no schools in France, at least in a sense as you have them in Russia or perhaps even as one can hear about them in Anglo-Saxon countries. (...) In France theatres have no standards in pedagogy. Of course there are some specialties such as Lecoq, who created a body theatre.

J.-P. T.: De Lecoq never agreed that he represented total pedagogy, for him it was a kind of complementary pedagogy. He has never been contributed an image like that of Stanislavski whose pedagogy is believed to embrace theatrical art as a whole. Lecoq never had such and his students reflect that, they actually represent a great number of theatrical ars poetics. Mnouchkine was following Lecoq, what can be witnessed in some of his plays, however, there are other students of his who were creating a completely different theatre from Lecoq's. Évelyne is right, the world of French theatres is not monolithic, it has never been. When you were studying in Strasbourg, did you find a kind of standard approach to theatres, François?

F. C.: At that time we did not call it like standard approach to theatres, but we had a splendid teacher, and indeed my generation had been the last one which could be instructed by him as he severely fell out with the management later. I am talking about Claud Petitpierre, who in spite of being an actor by profession, completely gave up acting so that he could fully devote himself to teaching. He was working on his dream as a teacher, and although he was unable to get as far as he would have liked to, he still created a system, a pedagogical approach, which he used in his classes. Partly it meant some physical exercises in the morning: archery, aikido, vocal improvisation, vocal exercises, singing, dance – classical and acrobatics too. He had come up with all these and he came steadily to the class-

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<sup>2</sup> Heiner Müller (1929–1995) German dramatist, director



From right to left: Jean-Pierre Thibaudat, Évelyne Didi,  
François Chattot, Udvaros Dorottya, Zsófia Rideg (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

es to check if students took the classes seriously enough. He based the exercises on what his own idea was of acting. He said that the moment an actor left this school he would have to be able to meet any director's requirements. So no matter what a director asks for, a good actor will have to be able to perform. A director has to be able to see the whole world in an actor. Thus an actor must become a representation of the whole humanity. This means that an actor is involved in an infinite dialogue, and his profession is to continue this infinite dialogue between the living and the dead. Stage is the only place where there is an open dialogue between the living and the dead. You will have to deal with the dead continuously. And with the living. You will have to be able to speak to the living – as it is the actors' task to be a kind of messenger. We are the messengers of the living, as I said earlier, we spread Shakespeare, Molière, Beckett among them, and we are spreading all our lost dead among them, too. This way life returns to the dead through the actors' lips. Dead is omnipresent as when the actor is speaking he is not reciting his own script. It does not matter if it is about a Greek tragedy or a contemporary piece. The living is flowing through the living, the whole process is mutual, done by the living and accepted by the living. According to Claude Petitpierre an actor is the carrier and the structure of this idea, and it does not matter if he is working with a director believing in simplicity or with another one who is trying to reconstruct a baroque theatre: the shape, the concrete approach that the theatre opts for is irrelevant. What is essential that the actor must identify with this spirituality, even if he has to recite only one poem, he still has to be aware that in that moment he is the arrestor between his roots – an actor always has very deep roots – and the cosmos. In addition, he is always obliged to act like this (and this is a very important and far-fetched ars poetica of Claude's), even though if his only role is to say "Here you are, Madam.", or "I'll bring the bread in a minute." or "Please pass me the salt." This is an extremely crucial part of the tradition: there are no small roles, no, never. In each and every case when you step on stage you represent a piece of humanity. I have brought a small quotation from one of Antonin Artaud's writings, in which he is talking about the same thing in his very own way:



Antonin Artaud (1896–1948)

“Because theatre is not that scenic parade where one develops virtually and symbolically – a myth: theatre is rather this crucible of fire and real meat where by an anatomical trampling of bones, limbs and syllables bodies are renewed and the mythical act of making a body presents itself physically and plainly.”<sup>3</sup>

In this vision by Artaud everything is very concrete. They are well thought-out therefore they are intellectual but at the same time quite real. The myth about the tendency of creating a body is on stage every evening. Actually this is one of the most dazzling characteristics of theatrical performances when we are all on stage (...) in our integrity facing the whole audience, and we all create one body. I do not know another place where something like this may ever happen.

<sup>3</sup> “Parce que le théâtre n’est pas cette parade scénique où l’on développe virtuellement et symboliquement un mythe / mais ce creuset de feu et de viande vraie où anatomiquement, / par piétinement d’os, de membres et de syllabes, / se refont les corps, / et se présente physiquement et au naturel / l’acte mythique de faire un corps.” Vö. Antonin Artaud, *Le théâtre et la science*. In: *Oeuvres*, Gallimard, 2004, 1544.

### **One Generation, Two Countries, Three Emblematic Actors: Évelyne Didi, François Chattot, Dorottya Udvaros**

At the roundtable on 15<sup>th</sup> April at this year’s MITEM two French actors and a Hungarian one talked of their profession. Moderator Jean-Pierre Thibaudat first introduced the participants of the discussion by giving an outline of their careers. His initial question referred to how the three actors had recently seen the changes concerning their work since their careers began. François Chattot primarily reflected on how the termination of permanent acting ensembles influenced the status of actors by increasing their existential uncertainty in France. Talking of conditions in Hungary, Dorottya Udvaros highlighted how, prior to the regime change, life was going and artists’ spiritual energies were liberated at a permanent company, also a means of securing existence. Then she related that instead of producing the unprecedented “flight” she had been hoping for, the regime change resulted in cuts to arts and culture funding, therefore everything possible needs to be done in order to protect permanent companies. Answering the same question, Évelyne Didi explained why, after fertile years at the Strasbourg National Theatre at the beginning of her career, she still opted for the independent status of a freelance artist, which made continuous renewal and collaboration with artists representing diverse schools possible. Dramaturge Zsófia Rideg was answered by all the three French participants, sharing mainly their own experience and views with the audience on how the traditionally rather conservative character of French theatre had been transformed during the last fifty years by innovators motivated by most different concepts as well as the theatre schools founded by them.



The inlet of the ventilation system of the Parliament building on Kossuth Square (photo: Tamás Wachslér)



ÁGNES PÁLFI



ZSOLT SZÁSZ

# Friendly Hand-Shakes?

## A Flash Report on Recent MITEM Presentations

While this year's MITEM was underway, one could see en route the Nemzeti (National) day by day how the stone carvers built the pedestal of the equestrian statue of Gyula Andrásy, the first minister of foreign affairs during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, on the concrete core which had been lying there lonely and undisturbed for months. This was theatre, too, right next to the Houses of Parliament, even if the erection of this statue did not generate such media coverage as the transposition of the one of Attila József, which, despite the opposition of certain leading intellectuals, came out successful with the poet gaining a better view from the new place at the Danube of that particular melon-rind floating by...

But before MITEM started, Attila Vidnyánszky was summoned by the director of the Burgtheater at a Goethe Institute panel to give account of the situation of democracy, or rather the lack of it, in Hungary.<sup>1</sup> However, Zoltán Imre, reportedly today's best authority on the history of national theatres, failed to prove as good a mediator between the two nations as was Count Andrásy in his time, who, after the 1849 bloodshed, turned the Bavarian Duchess Sisi and, through her, even the emperor in favour of Hungarians. Had he answered moderator Beatrix Kricsfalussy's question about the creation and role in our history of the first permanent Hungarian-language stone theatre, founded in Pest in 1837 and predecessor to the present National Theatre, words would probably not have run high and no scandal would have broken out after the Burgtheater's performance of *The Seagull*, either. Fortunately, the atmosphere at MITEM was not deter-

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<sup>1</sup> The event took place on 13th April, 2015. Its participants from abroad were Karin Bergmann, director of the Burgtheater, Joachim Lux, director of Thalia Theater, Hamburg, and Matthias Langhoff of Theater Vidy-Lausanne.

mined by this undeserving episode (even if the press was more preoccupied with it than with substantive reviews of the productions).

We must admit that *Szcenárium* had no intention to rehash the issue this year. Especially as last year we devoted a two-day professional programme to the topic of identity – sacrality – theatricality, the cornerstone of which could have been, according to our intention, the question of national identity.<sup>2</sup> However, we had to concede that the manner of “*the staging of nations*” is more relevant now than ever. After twelve years, there is a war again across the border of Hungary. And those arriving from a war zone put things differently and step beyond the usual limits of theatre differently from the dictate of Lehman’s theory of postdramatic theatre.

The Kiev DAKH Theatre’s production, *Dog’s Cage*, is meant to “insult” the audience, at which Hungarian viewers are no longer shocked after fifty years’ experience of alternative theatre. In the first part we observe in apathy the merci-



*Dog’s Cage*, based on I. Franko, KLIM, V. Barka,  
d: Vlad Troitsky; DAKH Centre of Contemporary Arts, Kiev  
(photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

less picture of Ukrainian society: the daily routine of amoebic beings vegetating as rats, the drill and cheesy dream world of prison life, reminiscent of soviet times, and fluorescent floral designs. In the second part we realize dispassionately again that now it is time for us to change places with the players and start a dog’s life, letting the sky above us be boarded up. However, when we are called on to sing something that is truly ours, typical of our nation or “tribe”, the play is beginning to take a serious turn: we get the feeling of sitting in a classroom where a most aggressive teacher is examining us and we must not contradict. It took some time until someone broke the silence and started to sing the Hungarian national anthem softly. Almost immediately everyone joined in. At the post-performance discussion, director Vlad Troitskyi reported that in the course of their eleven-stop tour of Western Europe it was the first occasion they managed to make the audience sing. Still, are we allowed to be proud of any such thing after the indoctrination at Goethe Institute? This question was ably answered at the discussion by the confession of a young man in his twenties, who said that the recent experience relieved him of his inhibition which had up till then questioned and made ambiguous his positive relationship to the national anthem and the profession of his national identity.

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<sup>2</sup> Papers related to the professional programme were published in the March, April and May issues of *Szcenárium*.

By a happy arrangement, the Macedonian presentation was by two days preceded by the roundtable discussion *National Theatres in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Stage director Dejan Projkovski, the artistic director of the Macedonian National Theatre, and general manager Dejan Lilic made it known that the greatest cultural enterprise of the barely twenty-year-old Republic of Macedonia had been the construction of a national theatre for all needs, which opened last year. The mega production *Eternal House* was prepared for the opening ceremony and expressedly demonstrated that “*the theatrical concept of nation*”, “*the staging of the nation*”, was not an outdated 19th-century idea, but relevant and existing practice when the current and unavoidable historical task lay in the promotion of a young nation’s consciousness. The director took meticulous care of this “self-representation” to comply with norms of European democracy and not to challenge the sensitivity of minorities living in great numbers in the country. At the same time, he represented on stage the Macedonian heroes of liberty, outstanding artists and scientists of the last one and a half centuries, as those who had been and were still playing a fundamental role in the present-day formation of national identity. It may be open to debate whether the director succeeded in finding a common artistic ground for the private mythology of the protagonist, the old Jewish woman, who is reclaiming the “eternal house” as her rightful property, and for the story of becoming a nation, elevated into cosmic space and time dimensions, where this “eternal house” gains a new symbolic meaning, being open to all who consider themselves part of the nation. However, it is indisputable that this most abstract dramaturgical construction induces audience involvement with the power of sensual evidence through the chorus in Act Two – similarly to the way the prime role is taken by the chorus in the second part of the Ukrainians’ *Dog’s Cage* production. Not insignificantly, both ensembles use the same archaic music, the roots of which reach back to the drama of antiquity and continue in the tradition of Christian liturgy.



Jordan Plevneš: *Eternal House*, National Theatre, Skopje, d: Dejan Projkovski (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

Also antique in its theme is the presentation of Sud Costa Occidentale Theatre, Palermo, Italy, *Verso Medea*, adapted from Euripides and directed by Emma Dante. It is made memorable partly by the reinterpretation of the figure of Medea, with not the murder of the children in its focus but the drama, stemming from differences in culture and civilisation, of a woman who gives birth, against the backdrop of the ethnically and culturally mixed Sicilian population’s multi-

layered identity. This is highlighted by the director when she stages Neapolitan and Sicilian dialects beside the standard Italian literary dialect. The Mancuso brothers, whose singing functions as the Greek chorus, also used the Greek and Latin languages. Their throat singing, rich in overtones, first triggered a giggle in the audience, then this special recitative, which primarily served to convey Medea's internal struggle, soon jerked us into this world of conflicts burdened with elementary passions. Director Imre Katona made the perceptive remark at the post-performance discussion that the choruses in ancient Greek theatres with a capacity of tens of thousands must also have used this technique and had this transmissive power in their time.

Apart from the above three productions, it was *Körhinta* (*Merry-Go-Round*) and *Isten ostora* (*Flagellum Dei*) which also had a dominant presence of ethnic tradition in their musical texture.

In our view, *Merry-Go-Round*, directed jointly by Attila Vidnyánszky and Zoltán Zsuráfszky, is pregnant with the chance of such a new genre as reverses former practice: it does not try to have dance tell a necessarily simplistic story but takes a complex epic story as its starting point to create a dance drama which does not illustrate but expands and sensualizes the world in which the plot takes place. In this staging of *Merry-Go-Round* the communal character, customs and festive rituals of Hungarian rural culture are added to the story and the personal drama of the main characters through folk dance in a virtuoso and genuine way.



*Verso Medea*, Euripides adaptation by Emma Dante, d: Emma Dante, Sud Costa Occidentale, Palermo (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)



Sarkadi–Fábri–Nádasy–Vincze: *Merry-Go-Round*, National Theatre, d: Attila Vidnyánszky, co-director: Zoltán Zsuráfszky (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

As the National Theatre is preparing for a *Don Quixote* premiere this year, we were very much looking forward to the Teatro de La Abadía production, *Entremeses*, directed by José Luis Gómez of Cervantes' comedies. The twenty-year old ensemble seems to be following in the footsteps of Giorgio Strehler, who earned a reputation in the 60s as, among other things, the reformer of *commedia dell'arte*. This presentation proves to us that tradi-



Eduardo de Filippo: *Inner Voices*, Piccolo Teatro di Milano – Teatro d'Europa Teatrè Uniti di Napoli, d: Toni Servillo (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

tionalism these days is a possible direction for stage renewal, especially if it is realised at such a level of aesthetic excellence, where superb character acting is coupled with exciting tempo changes, culture of singing and motion. The most distinguishing feature of Cervantes' poetics of the novel, namely the continuous interplay between the worlds of reality and imagination, was subtly represented on stage, and this was the prime mover of dramaturgy and main source of humour in the stories abundant in comic situations. If we come to think of the exceptional moment in Hungarian theatre history when József Ruszt directed Csokonai's *Karnyóné* (*The Widow of Mr Karnyó*) on the Egyetemi Színpad (University Stage) in the 60s and also drew an international response, we can only feel sorry for the failure of this kind of full-blooded theatricality of comedy-playing and "folk culture of laughter" to gain ground here at professional theatres over the last decades.

It is also the several centuries' culture of playing commedia dell'arte that the absurd comedy entitled *Inner Voices*, played in the Neapolitan dialect, originates from. Its author, Eduardo de Filippo (1900 – 1984), who came from a famous acting dynasty and is called the Italian Molière, has recently been ranked with Beckett, Ionescö or Pinter. The play, written after World War II in 1948, and directed by as well as starring Toni Servillo, arrived at MITEM within the framework of a major European tour just to bring down the house. It showed that the kind of irrationality which distinguished Italian society at the time of the play has, by now, become a constant condition of the world and that the characters in the drama very much resemble the modern type of man, who cannot and/or would not tell the difference between the worlds of virtuality and reality, especially if it suits his interest not to do so.

At the post-performance discussion we learnt from Thomas Jolly, the young French director, that the present staging of *Harlequin, Refined by Love* was already the third version of the original, which he created seven years ago, right after his graduation from the theatre academy, and which he meant as an act of



Pierre de Marivaux: *Harlequin, Refined by Love* Compagnie La Piccola Familia, Rouen, d: Thomas Jolly (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)



W. Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, National Theatre, d: David Doiashvili (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

to see these talented young people apparently having a good time and also in being made to believe them that they have something to say about love, which, let us admit, is one of the toughest subjects to be staged nowadays (it is enough to think of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by David Doiashvili<sup>3</sup> or Rózewicz's *White Marriage* at MITEM). From time to time, attention needs to be drawn to the fact that the language of love is to be acquired, too, and that theatre is a most effective medium for that, particularly when it is young people who pass on the vocabulary of this language from the stage to other young people. It is worth it, even if the idyllic scene, which seemed to be lasting for ever in the moment of finding each other, turns dark at the end of Jolly's latest staging and the protagonist sacrifices love at the altar of struggle for power.

It may well be that it was the last time we could see Tibor Pálffy at MITEM in the lead of *The Miser*, at present Molière's most frequently played piece in Hungary,



Molière: *The Miser*, Tamási Áron Theatre, Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe, d: László Bocsárdi (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

rebellion against contemporary postdramatic theatre. That is why he turned towards 18<sup>th</sup> century author Pierre de Marivaux, himself a rebel in his time, challenging the supremacy of Italian comedians as a French playwright. Beyond the so-called "French ease" which describes every bit of this performance, the secret of its success presumably lies in the viewers' pleasure

to see these talented young people apparently having a good time and also in being made to believe them that they have something to say about love, which, let us admit, is one of the toughest subjects to be staged nowadays (it is enough to think of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by David Doiashvili<sup>3</sup> or Rózewicz's *White Marriage* at MITEM). From time to time, attention needs to be drawn to the fact that the language of love is to be acquired, too, and that theatre is a most effective medium for that, particularly when it is young people who pass on the vocabulary of this language from the stage to other young people. It is worth it, even if the idyllic scene, which seemed to be lasting for ever in the moment of finding each other, turns dark at the end of Jolly's latest staging and the protagonist sacrifices love at the altar of struggle for power.

It may well be that it was the last time we could see Tibor Pálffy at MITEM in the lead of *The Miser*, at present Molière's most frequently played piece in Hungary, since the play will be removed from the programme of the Sepsiszentgyörgy theatre. It is a pity, since he has been one of the best – if not the best – Harpagon on the Hungarian stage over the last three decades. In addition to the actor's ingenuity, the secret of roaring success is to be found in director László Bocsárdi's interpretation of the work, which instead of making the protagonist a subject of ridicule gradually uncovered

<sup>3</sup> Márta Tömöry gave an analysis, entitled *A befogadó fantáziaképei* (The Recipient's Images) of the play at the Nemzeti Színház as well as the above-mentioned direction. See the 2014 issue of *Scenárium*, pp 55-64.)

the much-to-be-pitied and lovable man in him. It again proves to us indirectly that the genre congenial to Hungarian humour is not annihilating satire. In this case we saw a tragicomedy with ageing, and not money in its focus. This is expressed clearly by Harpagon's nudity, which makes him as fallible as a newborn.

This ambiguous tone seems to be best suited to Transylvanian, or more precisely Székely mentality, too, which is perfectly compatible with the unbroken tradition there of character acting. It is a shame that the "main stream" in Hungary does not prefer this style and dismisses it as outdated.

The comic vein of Romanian theatre was exposed by the Shakespeare production of the Bucharest National Theatre, *The Tempest*, directed by Alexander Morfov. He said that he was inspired to reconstruct the Elizabethan stage by the exceptional facilities of the renewed Romanian National Theatre. Scenography of this kind is thoroughly suitable to increase the intimacy of acting and to relieve the presentation of computer-controlled technical effects and allow actors to move props, like for example at the evocation of the storm. This aspect of animation apparently follows from the director's grounding in puppetry, too, but is not alien from Romanian theatre in general, either. Morfov belongs to the rare exceptions of directors who have a feel for the stage representation of eroticism and love (cf. the shipwreck episode in *Don Juan* at last year's MITEM<sup>4</sup>). Here, the scenes with the couple Miranda and Ferdinand remain in the memory, even if their story is not allowed a happy end by the present staging, either. Morfov's sceptic statement at the post-performance discussion on the general crisis of theatre and his fear of the pleasure of play vanishing at once from people's lives and the stage was also thought-provoking.

After a survey of the above nine productions, two aspects emerged as bases for classification and drawing parallels, namely the manner in which nation is represented on stage as well as the adherence to tra-



W. Shakespeare: *The Tempest*, National Theatre, Bucharest, d: Alexander Morfov (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)



Tadeusz Różewicz: *White Marriage*, Maska Teatr, Rzeszów, d: Oleg Ziugzda (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

<sup>4</sup> Of the topic and direction see Ágnes Pálfi: *Don Juan minden időben* (Don Juan Through Changing Times) in May 2014, *Szcenárium*, pp 37–52.

ditional acting. Now we continue by three presentations which used puppets, or may unequivocally be qualified as puppet theatre. The staging of Rózewicz's drama *White Marriage* (1973) is an authentic puppet theatre production, even if some critics, ignorant of this genre's aesthetics and mechanism of action, are embarrassed when they see a puppet and a human actor side by side on the stage, especially in this case when the topic is love, corporeality and morals. This piece is described by theatre history as melodrama and low comedy combined. It was just this contrast of genres which made the idea of a transcript for puppets a good one, because a puppet is far more adequate than a human actor for the suggestive visualisation and clashing of these generic extremes, let alone the undisguised representation of sexual intercourse. At the time when the play was written, the author's dominant intention must have been social criticism, however, in our time, when prudery and pornography mix to form an unprecedented symbiosis, the presentation raises the question at the level of anthropology whether corporeality and love



Matei Vişniec: *Voices in the Dark*, puppeteer: Éric Déniaud  
d: Éric Déniaud (photo: Collectif Kahraba)

have any chance in our life to be synchronised. The puppet theatre is capable of expressing and making fun of this civilisational fake-conflict – which nevertheless is, as it was in the past, taking its deadly toll – and by this it is already capable of healing, too. It is initiatory theatre par excellence, relieving spasms of anxiety, addressing us all, and of vital importance to adolescents primarily, when they first face the brutal force of sex.

In the 70s of the last century, European puppetry discovered how to represent daemons, ready to break out into the open, in the subconscious of modern man. This tendency, made to triumph by the Dutch Figurentheater Triangel as well as the English Stephen Mottram, well known also in Hungary, has become the one and only among Western-European puppet theatres playing for adults. However, while these particular daemons were – at least in the beginning – embodied by amorphous imaginary creatures there, Éric Déniaud has human-shaped miniature beings play the almost-stories and monologues of Matei Vişniec's poetic texts on urban loneliness. A major element in the mechanism of action is that while viewers need to focus on under-illuminated and hardly visible images, the text itself becomes extraordinarily intensive, somewhat similarly to the classical shadow play which makes the direct projection of happenings in the soul possible. Having seen the presentation, a question arose in our mind about why this school has not taken root in Hungary, where poetic and dramatic texts requiring this kind of representation are written in increasing numbers these days.

The way director Viktor Ryzhakov stages the puppet in *A Night's Lodging* is of an absolutely different kind. Ryzhakov, similarly to Tadeusz Kantor, presents life-size mannequins on stage as duplicates of marginalised individuals. Though this solution here does not carry the sort of symbolic meaning as with Kantor. The actors drag along their duplicates as some ballast in order to illustrate that the players cannot get rid of their burden, whether this forced symbiosis be interpreted as a mental or a physical weight. Still, the animation projected onto the ever-changing, abstract setting creates such an exciting psycho-space, never seen before on Hungarian stage, as throws entirely fresh light upon Gorky's play.



Maxim Gorky: *A Night's Lodging*, National Theatre, d: Viktor Ryzhakov (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)



Michel Deutsch–Matthias Langhoff: *Cinéma Apollo*, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, d: Matthias Langhoff – Caspar Langhoff (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

Having seen these three puppet performances, we welcome the genre's long-awaited coming of age at this year's MITEM anyway.

No one can say that the so-called postdramatic school has been underrepresented at this festival. Three of the productions were undoubtedly typical examples of this "main stream": *Cinéma Apollo*, *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Seagull*, directed by such famous European artists as Matthias and Caspar Langhoff, Luk Perceval and Jan Bosse, respectively. Although this idea of ours would not be easy to support in an exact manner, because even those aesthetes evade the accurate definition of the concept of postdramatic theatre who introduced the term by the inspiration of Hans-Thies Lehmann in the last year of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and have been propagating it, like Patris Pavis, ever since. It is almost unique in Hungarian theatre history that Lehmann's work came out in Hungarian as early as one year after its publication, in 2000<sup>5</sup>, and that a new school of theatre

<sup>5</sup> Hans-Thies Lehmann: *Postdramatisches Theater*. Verlag der Autoren, Frankfurt am Main, 1999. In Hungarian: Hans-Thies Lehmann: *Poszt dramatikusszínház*, Balassi Kiadó, Budapest, 2009.

theory sprang from it, aspiring to exclusivity by now. It is easy to see that the adjective 'postdramatic', like 'postmodern', denotes not only an aesthetic category but also a general state of the world, referring, at the end of the day, to the unfeasibility of man as a dramatic being, incapable of active participation in their own life. However, we in East-Central Europe, where exposure to the constellation of world politics has been present for centuries, are coping with this traumatic condition in a completely different manner from that of the citizens and artists in Western realms. Yet it is now observable that as a consequence of the world crisis, which did not spare affluent societies, either, and existential exposure, a feeling of responsibility and a need for practising active citizenship are arising in our Western-European colleagues, too. It was not only Vlad Troitskyi at MITEM who stressed that it is time to stop pointing fingers at one another and take personal responsibility for what is happening to and around us, but also François Chattot, protagonist of *Cinéma Apollo*, who, already over sixty, even founded a new company called "Service Public" in that spirit in 2013<sup>6</sup>.

The above was put forward because we ourselves do not quite comprehend why we were not overwhelmingly impressed with these presentations heralded as superproductions. The parade of the multimedia inventory in *Cinéma Apollo*, directed by the two Langhoffs, father and son, was certainly compelling. Our attention was also caught by the fake documentary film extract in the first part and we would not say that the autobiographically inspired story on 20<sup>th</sup> century man's experience of displacedness was of no interest, either. However, the ultimate suggestion of the production was that we, like the protagonist, are left outside of our life, therefore, unlike Odysseus, we have nowhere to return. We took home the depressing feeling that the performance had too much text and that the outburst of emotion by the protagonist's casual chat partner, the female employee at the cinema, on account of her bitterness over her unlived life could be nothing but a belated reaction to the story she had been listening to, in fact an unnarratable one.

The other two productions, contrary to that of Matthias and Caspar Langhoff, were not author-oriented – Luk Perceval and Jan Bosse put a novel and a drama by the two best-known Russian classic writers, Dostoevsky and Chekhov, on stage, inviting us to pose the question whether the primary criterion of postdramatic theatre, the new attitude toward the literary material, has been done justice to. *The Brothers Karamazov* is by no accident termed a novel-tragedy, which depicts the relationship between the possible perpetrators of the patricide at an existential, psychological and intellectual level simultaneously. Apparently the director shows little interest in this complexity, and, instead, is dealing directly with spirituality, the nature, presence or lack of faith in god. This simplification does

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<sup>6</sup> Actors' existential crisis and the situation of an acting career in the changing world were the topics in focus at one of the MITEM professional programmes, entitled *One Generation, Two Countries, Three Emblematic Actors*, on 15th April. The roundtable was moderated by Jean Pierre Thibaudat, and had Évelyne Didi, Dorottya Udvaros and François Chattot as participants.

not serve the play well. Perhaps this is why even viewers familiar with the novel find it difficult to identify the two brothers: Alyosha, who entered a monastery, and Ivan, the poet-philosopher brooding over the ultimate questions of faith. Although Mitya, who lives his own faith sensuously, is unmistakably recognised from the start (if for no other reason, because he is the only active figure in the presentation), his true inner drama will never come to light in this directorial concept. If Grushenka (played brilliantly by Polish-born Patrycja Ziolkowska) did not appear on stage, this performance would hardly amount to more than a Readers Theatre using high-standard scenery and excellent acting.

*The Seagull*, presented by Burgtheater, made us declare again that Chekhov is a great author. We may firmly state this also because the director felt no need to change the structure and plot of the drama or to trim its text. Still, the postdramatic character of the direction is to be caught in the interaction with the audience provoked by the actors at the beginning of the performance and in the appearance in Scene One of the actress in Nina's role (Aenne Schwarcz) as a sort of waterfowl, funny and lovable at the same time. It is a shame that this kind of playfulness and affinity for caricature does not permeate the entire direction. Although there are a couple of ideas throughout the production which resemble the symbolic language of the first scene (e.g. the photo-animation, the scene of lonely Treplev playing the guitar), the further devices do not much differ from the psycho-realistic clichés of conventional theatre.

Three more presentations at the festival might as well be classified – on account of certain formal features – as belonging to the same postdramatic trend: *Faulkner.Silence*, *Brand* and *Flagellum Dei*.

The exam performance *Faulkner.Silence*, directed by Viktor Ryzhakov, prides itself on the same virtues with regard to play as *Gogol.revizor* last year. The spirit of this school is distinct from contemporary Western aspirations primarily in that



F. M. Dostoevsky: *The Brothers Karamazov*, Thalia Theater, Hamburg, d: Luk Perceval (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)



A. P. Chekhov: *The Seagull*, Burgtheater, Vienna, d: Jan Bosse (photo: Reinhard Werner)



Faulkner: *Silence*, a W. Faulkner adaptation, d: Viktor Ryzhakov, Moscow Art Theatre School (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)



H. Ibsen: *Brand*, National Theatre, d: Sándor Zsótér (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

in theory, have been suitable for another successful presentation, but, as we see it, this company, however hard it tried, eventually failed to relate to the selected work, or its foreign social context, as its own.

*Brand*, directed by Sándor Zsótér, and *Flagellum Dei*, directed by Attila Vidnyánszky, share one thing in common: the focus of the selected works and the presentations is a dramatic hero in the classical sense of the word. This is paramount in both enterprises even if both directors happen to deconstruct and revise the narrative structure of the initial work, which is a standard postdramatic procedure. *Brand* is a romantic hero, Attila is one of myth and legend – neither is to be gauged by any ordinary measure. Their brand of solitude is distinct from that of postdramatic works' characters', who feel extruded even from their very life. The heroes of these two presentations are eager and able to do something not only for themselves but for others as well. They are entrusted with responsibility for a larger community, or even have to decide the fate of an entire nation or empire. It is not true that these two stagings were created out of some gazing into the nostalgic past. What we see on stage is exciting because it puts into circulation the heritage

the deconstruction of the selected literary material is realised through the array of devices of the Russian avant-garde, above all the reform of the language of theatre associated with Meyerhold's name. It is characterised by using etudes for construction, harshness and dynamism, extreme caricature in playing style, which puts psychologism into the shade and gives priority to team work rather than brilliant individual acting. These devices were functioning perfectly during last year's performance, but, in our view, failed to do so this year. It is not easy to explain why. It is perhaps because Gogol's satire is a seminal work of Russian national identity and, as such, the director and the young team found it fitting from the outset. Now they have undertaken the stage adaptation of an already unconventional Western novel, which could,



*Flagellum Dei*, based on Miklós Bánffy's *Great Lord*, National Theatre, d: Attila Vidnyánszky (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)

interesting is that this fifty-year old theatre workshop represents such a unique profile and operating model on the world's contemporary theatrical palette as rooted in the autonomy of the actor and equal partnership throughout the creative process leading to a performance. *The Chronic Life* presented at MITEM is also an imprint of this kind of operation, with the actors not shaping roles in the classical sense but each of them singing a part, embodying characters they themselves have created and elaborated, who may also be regarded as the iconised figures of a generation – the so-called “great generation”. The coffin placed in the middle of the playing area, as a sacrificial altar, and the ritual taking place around it may be interpreted as a singular funeral observance, suggesting that we



*The Chronic Life*, OdinTeatret –Holstebro, d: Eugenio Barba (photo: Tommy Bay)

of European dramatic literature, the heroes of 19<sup>th</sup> century late-Romanticism and 20<sup>th</sup> century Art Nouveau, by stripping them of the conventional array of devices which were attached to their former stage representations in the viewer's consciousness. We believe we can safely call these two productions Neo-romantic, but it is not our duty to decide here whether this kind of Neo-romantic vision is a phenomenon inside or outside the postdramatic canon.

On 11<sup>th</sup> April, at the presentation of the book “*Land of Ashes and Diamonds*”<sup>7</sup>, we rose and observed a minute's silence in memory of Judith Malina, co-founder of the American Living Theater. Theatre historians now consider this experimental company, founded in New York in 1947, as a forerunner of postdramatic theatre. Interestingly enough, Odin Teatret, created by Eugenio Barba in 1964, is not to be found in the Wikipedia list, although it could rightly be there. But what is most interesting

<sup>7</sup> The presentation of Eugenio Barba's book was a pre-event to MITEM, with the author's participation and Julia Varley's presentation.



Statue of *Theiresias* in the Kossuth square metro station, sculptor: Mátyás László Oláh

friendly left hand to shake, pointing in the direction of the escalator, which is moving upwards from the “underworld”...

have irrevocably arrived at the end of an era. After the playing area has been surrounded by terrorists, the characters have no other choice but, with that particular key they possess as artists, escape from it.

Which way next? At the metro station in Kossuth square, where we pass by weekly, everything looks just the same for the time being: Tiresias’ post-modern doggy sculpture is offering his

## Zsolt Szász – Ágnes Pálfi: Friendly Hand-Shakes?

### A Flash Report on Recent MITEM Presentations

The two editors of *Szcenárium* first reflect on the shaky roundtable, initiated by the Burgtheater, at Goethe Intézet (Goethe Institute) before MITEM, then on the incident following the company’s performance of *The Seagull*, adding that the atmosphere of the festival was fortunately not determined by these undeserving episodes. They continue by a survey and assessment of the festival presentations structured according to the following points: *the thematization of national identity* (*Dog’s Cage*, directed by Vlad Troitskyi; *Eternal House* directed by Dejan Projkovski); *adherence to traditional acting* (*Entremeses*, directed by José Luis Gómez; *Verso Medea*, directed by Emma Dante; *Inner Voices*, directed by Toni Servillo; *Harlequin, Refined by Love*, directed by Thomas Jolly; *The Miser*, directed by László Bocsárdi; *The Tempest*, directed by Alekszandr Morfov; *Körhinta* (*Merry-Go-Round*), directed by Attila Vidnyánszky); *headway of puppetrical approach* (*White Marriage*, directed by Oleg Žiugžda; *Voices in the Dark*, directed by Éric Déniaud; *A Night’s Lodging*, directed by Viktor Ryzhakov); *types of aspirations to postdramatic theatre* (*Cinéma Apollo*, directed by Matthias Langhoff and Caspar Langhoff; *The Brothers Karamazov*, directed by Luk Perceval; *The Seagull* directed by Jan Bosse; *Faulkner. Silence*, directed by Viktor Ryzhakov). Within the latter they group *Brand* (directed by Sándor Zsótér) and *Flagellum Dei* (directed by Attila Vidnyánszky) with the neo-romantic movement on account of putting on a hero in the classic sense. Appraising *The Chronic Life* (directed by Eugenio Barba), they underline that the now fifty-year old Odin Theatre has, from the beginning,

represented a creed which looks upon the autonomy of the actor as the starting point for artistic work in partnership. The editors also give voice to their opinion that it is presentations thematizing national identity and renewing traditional acting which have become most memorable at this year’s festival and that the headway of puppetrical approach indicates the genre’s coming of age.



Students from University of Kaposvár at Aleksei Levinsky’s master class



BÉATRICE PICON-VALLIN



# “Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors”

## National Theatres in the 21st Century\*

It requires great courage to raise the issue of national theatres at a festival, which is such an important, moreover, a very central issue in Europe. This is a very complex subject: the task that a national theatre aims and undertakes varies from country to country on one hand, because of the differences in their historical background, but on the other hand, because of the actual context. There is no regulation or recipe to provide guidance for such a situation. The tasks of national theatres with such outstanding status are determined by the political and cultural environment, which is very characteristic, completely variable, moreover, always in transition at the same time. A festival may first of all promote the clear statement of what there is to be done rather than a comprehensive solution to the problems.

However, if exclusively national theatres were invited to such festivals without contrasting their operations with the practices of “emerging” or simply independent theatres, the national theatres would dim the bigger part of the outstandingly colourful palette of theatres where constantly new forms are coming to existence questioning even the consistence of theatres. The MITEM festival had not made this mistake, since besides the Thalia Theater, the Burgtheater, the Piccolo Teatro of Milan and the Budapest National Theatre etc. there were also some starters (Piccola Familia) invited to the event. A national troupe was represented by Odin as the representative of the historic movement of the Third Theatre. We could also see some institutions open to international co-operation such as the Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne presenting *Apollo Cinema* directed by Matthias Langhoff, who despite his German origin, opted for French citizenship. A school adaptation by MHAT of Moscow could also be seen.

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\* A roundtable with the same title was held at MITEM on 18 April, 2015.

Starting off with the issue regarding the existence and functions of national theatres the role of language or any languages spoken in a given country, in addition, the composition of audiences in countries where multinational families live can be thought-provoking. Furthermore, the cultural traditions of a country (or capital city) or their relationship to history which is manifested through the theatre as a community art form may be discussed. As the connection established and maintained by a theatre with a nation and a republic as theoretical existences may as well give food for thought. Moreover, it may also be interesting to deal with the meaning of “Volkstheater” or the function of a troupe that is intended to reflect society (ages and differences in social background etc...).

Undoubtedly every national theatre should select the forms of dialogues in their most adequate ways with respect to their traditions and with regards to their material and intellectual heritage, especially in such an imminent era like our current times which are loaded with so many transformations and are endangered by uniformity

A theatre is regarded as such a medium of artistic and social life at the crossing point of the past and present whose main role is to cultivate a lively relationship with the “shadows of forgotten ancestors” (this poetic expression was inspired by the Russian and Ukrainian translation of the movie title of *The Wild Horses of Fire* by Szergej Paradzsanov). The festival panel discussion with the participation of Macedonian, Hungarian, Algerian, Russian and French directors had turned out to be very exciting and forward looking since it focuses on this inevitable dialogue, which stands diametrically opposed to all kinds of museum conservation of traditions and made it obvious that national theatres may as well get integrated into any multinational local or post-colonial contexts, or even in a globalised multicultural environment in various ways. During the dialogue there were talks about



Larisa Kadochnikova: *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, collage  
(source: gazeta.dt.ua)

the receptivity of national theatres regarding other nations’ cultures, the role of invitations of foreign guest directors in the enrichment of a troupe’s artistic development, furthermore, how this practice may be made more flexible while it was pointed out that theatres should be aware of their special expertise. At the same time attention was drawn to the danger that lies in national theatres’ proximity to the political power that directly supports their operations.

The Budapest National Theatre provided evidence of its great openness and receptivity by the organisation of the MITEM festival by setting up meetings, panel discussions and workshops (courses by A. Vasiljev and A. Levinskij) as complements to the theatrical performances of the programme. There was also a colloquium featuring V. Mejerhold’s pioneering working life as a director who

at the beginning of 20th century Russia had thought over the issues of a national theatre by studying how it historically integrated foreign experiences, moreover, he came up with the idea of how this institution could be made even more attractive by embracing oriental theatrical traditions.

The performance of *The Eternal House* based on Jordan Plevnes multi-item play by the Macedonian National Theatre, which opened in 2013, was very impressive (despite the problems which unavoidably arise during such a tour). It could also be noticed how David Doiasvili, who was invited as a director by the Budapest National Theatre, could take advantage of the special features of the transformable stage that were applied in the astonishing performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is a very versatile machinery whose magical playfulness inevitably conjured up images of those rhythmical spaces which Adolphe Appia had been dreaming of in her graphic art. What I was personally most eagerly interested in at this MITEM beyond the exploration of Hungarian playwrights is the relationship between directing and music. In this respect I found the Ukrainian Dakh Daughters group directed by Vlad Troickij very promising. The film adaptation of *The Boy Changed into a Stag* (*Szarvassá változott fiú*) helped me to get acquainted with a Hungarian poet called Ferenc Juhász as well as two amazing actors namely Mari Törőcsik and Zsolt Trill. I saw some mysterious and “grotesque” pictures while I sensed a very rich world of music owing to the combination of Schnittke, Martinov and Jordi Saval. That is why I am so sorry for not being able to see Attila Vidnyánszky's stage adaptation, which he based this very original film adaptation on.

*Translated from French original into Hungarian by Zsófia Rideg  
Translated from Hungarian into English by Anikó Kocsis*

### **Béatrice Picon-Vallin: “Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors”**

#### **National Theatres in the 21st Century**

The presentation at the 2015 MITEM conference on Meyerhold by theatre historian professor Béatrice Picon-Vallin was published in the September issue of *Szcenárium*. The present paper, also a contribution to a professional programme (“National Theatres in the 21st Century”), discusses how the special functions of national theatres are to be rephrased in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In her view, an event like MITEM may first of all promote the clear statement of what there is to be done rather than the comprehensive solution of the problems. She regards the festival panel discussion, with the participation of directors from Macedonia, Hungary, Algeria, Russia and France, exciting and forward-looking on account of its focus on the inevitable dialogue which nations and ethnic groups need to engage in with their own past and special tradition, and a most efficient framework of which is provided right by the theatre. This approach, she says, stands diametrically opposed to the one which looks upon the function of national theatres as some museum conservation of tradition. The roundtable has proved to her that the particular national theatres may be integrated into a multinational local context or a post-colonial milieu or even a globalised multicultural environment in different manners. She considers it a positive development that the risks involved in national theatres' proximity to the political power which directly supports their operation have been formulated at this forum.



SEBASTIAN-VLAD POPA



## j'aime mitem

A festival organiser, even if he would love to behave like an anthology editor, cannot really behave like that. This latter one may freely rely on his intuitions while picking the poems when it is hard to define his object. On the contrary, a festival organiser has to fit the complicated and difficult complexity of things into his own “anthology”, during which act his attention is mostly focused on the risk factors of the given historical moment. One of the greatest sadness of the theatre is that it is unable to keep its masterpieces alive; not as if their preservation were practically impossible, but because any theatrical masterpiece may lose its validity owing to the changes that a human being goes through during historical times. Eventually the creators may get cemented in the historical times of their own masterpieces whilst they should reinvent the changeable present from day to day. And this is not always successful. It often happens that the creators of masterpieces make compromises, so they integrate into the undivided present time, which they may lose sight of in the end as a result of doing so.

Perhaps this explains it why at the second MITEM after listening to Luc Perceval's or Matthias Langhoff's presentations my initial enthusiasm changed into indecisiveness similarly to those situations when we face heavy commonplaces.

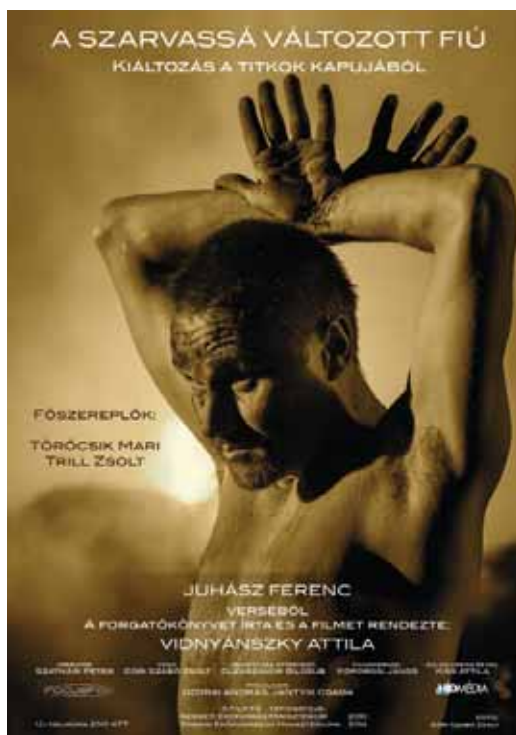
Banality in a theatre builds up in a very complicated way. It appears to be exposing itself with the virtuosity of the actors throughout a long period of time while applying a wide range of the abundance of the means of theatrical techniques etc. The performance itself often turns out to be an overloaded and hyper-technologized structure whose topic – therefore the essence of its legitimacy- is some naivety which is not even touching. Just imagine a factory sprawling over several hectares mass-producing the same kind of handle. The product is in short supply of course, therefore the spare parts -in a grotesque way- seem to have more attention and importance than they should otherwise.

The truth is that the “conscience” of contemporary theatre should be identified with not more but narration and cynicism even if all its respect is taken into consideration. Everybody or almost everybody regards it as important that the same handle should be manufactured and the same story should be told about the collapse of the present and the tragedy of man. However, the same handle sometimes may as well open a refrigerator door: and this is where our deep frozen hope and love lie; it depends on us if we are capable of opening the door; yet opening a refrigerator door does not require a heart, and our heart is stored in the refrigerator anyway...

Attila Vidnyánszky, this artist with tremendous talent invites highly respected artists, who he admires, to his festival at the National Theatre. However, this festival is a hazardous game. Some of the admired artists may again reinvent the present, while others being unable to do so are trying to force the present to compromise.

(Some others are such opportunists that they publicly insult this present, moreover they do it on the same stage as they are invited to, as the actors of the Viennese Burgtheater did. A festival is a hazardous game... g.e.d.\*)

Despite the unpredictable “opportunisms” that obviously characterises the orientation of MITEM, it is intended to be rather the refusal of any compromise on behalf of the “dialogue” with the contemporary theatre regardless of the location of the theatre. Similarly to the character of the National Theatre when Vidnyánszky defines the profile of the festival he strictly excludes performances with the jargon of the crumbling subculture as well as social theatres. The festival refuses petty thinking, the so-called solidarity theatre, hunting for “target audiences” as well as the “generation principle”. Vidnyánszky is not willing to take part in the global culture of flouting and the declaration of the menial character of human nature, therefore in basically nothing that the civil servants of culture usually appreciate in art, on the contrary, he more and more openly voices its class struggle character. Whether intended or not, but the main orientation of the MITEM programme is the same as director Attila Vidnyánszky’s main interest is:



\* Quod erat demonstrandum – which is what had to be proven.

focusing on the archetypes. And if it is so, then it can positively be said that the festival is oriented to a powerful and creative modernity.

Modernity looks back on the archetype as it sees the future lying in it. In the stage production of *Isten ostora* (Flagellum Dei) Attila Vidnyánszky shows the birth of Hungarian intellectualism in the highly polarised field of Asian shamanism and doctor Fausto; ethnic groups may as well come and go, play around, mix and mingle with each other and dissolve hatred in erotics. The world of Hungarians juggling with the nostalgic sentiments towards primordial roots and the eagerness for the transformation of nature creates a vivid vision of the birth of European culture in a concentrated way. The film adaptation of *A szarvassá változott fiú* (*The Boy Changed into a Stag*) by Attila Vidnyánszky follows through the raving way of the full spectrum of senses during a traditional funeral. In *Kutyaház* (*Dog's Cage*) by the production of the Ukrainian director Vlad Trockij a community forced into war redefines itself by its return to the archetypal quality of songs at the threshold of an apocalyptic havoc of cruelty and cannibalism. The strong yearning for return to the archetype and simultaneously the desire for individual freedom creates such a constant contradiction in modern people, whose dissonance leads to the definition of themselves too. The dramatic state of mind of modern men originates from this dissonance. Owing to this dramatic and exceptionally modern state enables theatres to keep up their dynamic existence no matter what the expectations are.

I attempt to say that these days MITEM is one of the rare and supposedly last *modern* cultural events. Attila Vidnyánszky with the festival and its programme is one of the last contemporary modern artists. It is also possible –best of luck to us– that Vidnyánszky is one of the members of such an indispensable minority that is able to define a historic era.

*Translated from Romanian original into Hungarian by Edit Kulcsár  
Translated from Hungarian into English by Anikó Kocsis*

### **Sebastian-Vlad Popa: j'aime mitem**

Sebastian-Vlad Popa (b. 1968), the excellent Romanian aesthete, teatrologist, professor and editor of INFINITEZIMAL, has had close contact with the director Attila Vidnyánszky-led Nemzeti Színház (National Theatre) for two years. He presented a paper at the conference on the grotesque last year (*Kings On the Backstairs*) and visited both MITEMs. This essay gives account of his experience at the 2015 MITEM. He emphasises that the aspects of selection for the festival suggest an intense and creative modernity which sees the future in turning towards the archetype. As telling examples of this, he appraises two directions by Attila Vidnyánszky, one being the stage production *Isten ostora* (*Flagellum Dei*) and the other one the film *Szarvassá változott fiú* (*The Boy Changed into a Stag*), as well as the production *Dog's Cage*, directed by the Ukrainian Vlad Troitskyi. Finally, he voices his opinion that MITEM “is one of the rare and presumably the last *modern* cultural events”.



# “The Characters in the Play Are Wearing a Double Cockade.”

Zsolt Szász Talks to Director András Urbán

Zsolt Szász: “It does not happen very often that a minority Hungarian artist should stage a Serbian national classic and that this production should be presented at such an international theatre festival as MITEM, which is already in its third year now. I am especially happy about this since one of the central ideas of our festival from the very beginning is that the question of national identity must also be embraced by theatrical practice. *Szcenárium* devoted a two-day professional programme to this topic in 2014.<sup>1</sup> Recalling Eugenio Barba’s conceptions from 20–25 years ago, we discussed the question whether the theory on the all-time primacy of artistic identity over national identity and *genius loci* was still holding strong among theatre practitioners. As a pre-event to MITEM in 2015, a panel discussion took place at the Budapest Goethe Institute, where the guests from Austria and Germany approached this question from an entirely different point of view, that of the liberal concept of democracy. They formulated that the role which national theatres used to play in the creation of nation states in Europe had been eliminated. Contrary to that, it transpired at the forum – where, beside participants from Russia, France and Hungary, representatives of the newly formed national theatres in Macedonia and Algeria, two young democracies, took part – that this institution still had a decisive role to play in this region of Europe. This year’s MITEM is going to see a similar roundtable discussion in the topic, moderated, just like last year, by

<sup>1</sup> See the description of the programme entitled *Identitás – szakralitás – teatralitás* (Identity – Sacrality – Theatricality) in Hungarian and English in *Szcenárium*, March 2014, pp. 73–77. Related articles: Schola Teatru Węajty, presentation by Johann Wolfgang Niklaus and Małgorzata Dżigadlo Niklaus in *Szcenárium*, April 2014, pp. 23–26.; Pálfi, Ágnes – Szász, Zsolt: *Önazonosság és művész-lét* (Self-Identity and Being an Artist), *Ibid.*, pp. 14–22; Szász, Zsolt: *Genius loci* (Genius Loci), *Ibid.*, pp. 27–33.



Jovan Sterija Popović: Curtain image of *The Patriots*, the 2015 production of the Serbian National Theatre  
(Photo: Vicencio Žaknić)

Ernő Verebes, whose home in Zenta, Serbia, is hosting our present conversation. Let me begin by saying that *The Patriots in your direction* became the production of the season at the Serbian National Theatre, Belgrade, last year. I take it as an indication of the responsiveness of the Serbian community, which has lived through a long period of war and has existed within the framework of a new state formation since 2006, to the findings you exposed them to. Reading the reviews, I have the impression that you managed to tear up emotionally a historic trauma which had been inhibited till then. Am I right? For about five years, your stagings have been characterised by this kind of clear-cut line: you reach for national topoi, taboos and major issues, as demonstrated by your choice of drama as well.”

András Urbán: “I must set forth beforehand that in many cases it is not me but the theatres inviting me that select the play. However, it becomes indifferent from the moment I accept, because that is already my own decision. Obviously, it is no accident that I am invited to stage Serbian classics, that is to direct drama addressing questions of national or social identity. These requests often make me feel that the particular theatre would like to do something different, something out of the ordinary, and would welcome change. When I started dealing with these “grave” issues, I was primarily interested in the relationship between minority and majority. By the way, the problem often arises with regard to my person, too, that I, as a Hungarian, take a critical stance towards this country while, after all, I used to be a citizen of Yugoslavia before I turned into one of Serbia. This situation raises the question whether I do or do not have the right to criticize Serbian conditions, and it does not come from extreme nationalists only. In the majority society there is a continuous presence of a sort of anxiety, a drive to monitor, which is easy to discredit. It is a sensitive issue even if many people think



*National theatres in Europe today* – Panel discussion in Goethe Institut 13th April 2015. Participants from left to right: Matthias Langhoff – director, Karin Bergmann – managing director of Burgtheater Vienna, Joachim Lux – managing director of Thalia Theater Hamburg, Beatrix Kricsfalusi – moderator, Zoltán Imre – theatre historian and Attila Vidnyánszky – managing director of National Theatre, Budapest (photo: Goethe Institut)



Pass-port No. 2. – or *The devil himself*, joint production of Kosztolányi Dezső Theatre (Subotica, Szabadka, Serbia) and MASZK Association (Szeged, Hungary), 2012, d: András Urbán (photo: Róbert Révész, source: színhaz.szeged.hu)

that nationalism has become an unimportant and hackneyed topic. It is not so. It is a constant presence in our life, whether or not we deny it. Minority existence is certainly a special situation and although it need not be overestimated or put on a pedestal, it is a fact that it creates a specific identity and attitude towards the majority of a different nationality, and, for that matter, also towards ourselves, that is the Hungarian minority. I directed a trilogy entitled *Pass-port*<sup>2</sup>, the second part of which, *Maga az ördög* (*The Devil Itself*), places exactly this Hungarian – Hungarian relationship under scrutiny. I am utterly preoccupied with this system of relations from every possible angle. The problem is that within political discourse it is very hard to get to essential contents which would involve some truth or a search for truth, instead of ideological battles in relation to ideological options. The liberal party will ignore certain topics because it assumes that they belong to the right wing. And vice versa. Neither is concerned with the other's topics, saying they would be playing into the hands of the other one. Therefore truth is ground to dust in this discourse and the possibility of free speech annulled. However, it is indisputable that it is difficult to deny an existing language community. At the same time, belonging to a given language community does not necessarily



József Katona: *Bánk Bán*, Újvidéki Színház / The Novi Sad Theatre, 2014, d: András Urbán (photo: Srđan Doroški, source: uvszinhaz.com)

entail commitment to a certain political ideology. In the case of *Bánk bán* (*Ban Bánk*) for instance, which I staged in Újvidék (Novi Sad) with the Hungarian company<sup>3</sup>, there is a conservative concept of national theatre according to which one must feel it uplifting in connection with such a performance to belong to a particular national community. Whereas what I consider to be a true concept of national theatre would be dealing with the concrete problems in a given – not even nec-

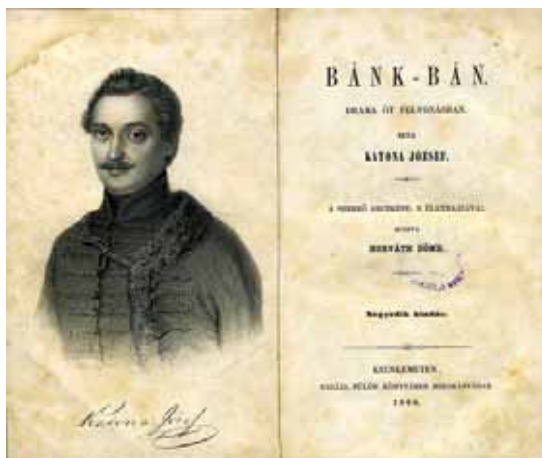
essarily national – community. Instead of taking part at a production, either as creator or audience, with the ambition of celebrating national tradition tailored to our social standing. Art is meant to be more. Situations and positions are never unequivocal in life. And art is intended, through its critical approach to reality, exactly to bring to light conflicts stemming from this fact.”

<sup>2</sup> The three productions were realised within the framework of Magyarország–Szerbia IPA, *Határon Átnyúló Együttműködés* (Hungary–Serbia IPA Cross-Border Co-operation) programme, with the co-operation of Kosztolányi Dezső Színház (Dezső Kosztolányi Theatre) in Szabadka (Subotica), Serbia, and MASZK Egyesület (MASZK Association) in Szeged, Hungary, in 2011/12.

<sup>3</sup> It premiered on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014. See Katalin Keserü's review entitled *POSZT 2015* of the award-winning performance in *Szcenárium*, October 2015, pp. 91–92.

“You have just mentioned preferences represented by politics. Apparently, this is what meets the eye on the surface. However, if we examine more deeply the relationship between the Serbian and Hungarian nations, we will find that we have not reached the same stages in the creation, maintenance and renewal of the model of the nation state. This phase difference existed during the last century as well. Take for example Katona’s *Bánk bán*, which preceded *The Patriots* by more than three decades<sup>4</sup>, with the author, Popović, even locking the piece for fifty years<sup>5</sup>. He might have done so because he did not presume that the Serbian community was mature enough yet to look at itself critically. In contrast, *Bánk bán* became emblematic the moment the nation awoke to self-awareness and the revolution broke out on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1848. This is one of the reasons why the piece is so difficult to reinterpret even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I wonder if you faced these questions in the course of staging the two classic plays?”

“All my experience is related to the region of former Yugoslavia. I am not really present in Hungary as a private individual, let alone a director – and I am not at all present at official theatres. Currently I am doing a lot more direction at Serbian and Croatian language theatres. It is not easy for me to define my artistic identity. Once I said jokingly that I was actually a Serbian director. The reception of *The Patriots* was interesting in this respect, too. You need to know that the author, Jovan Sterija Popović (1806–1856), counts as the great national “teacher of the people” in



József Katona: *Bánk Bán*, the 1860 edition of the drama published in Kecskemét (source: bacstudas.hu)



Jovan Popović: *Jovan Sterija Popović*, oil, canvas, 1836, Serbian National Museum, Belgrade (source: newsweek.rs)

<sup>4</sup> Katona submitted the first version of the play to a drama competition by *Erdélyi Múzeum*, a literary periodical, in September 1815 and won no award. The final version was completed in 1819 and appeared in print in 1820. It was first staged in Kassa (now Kosice, Slovakia), in 1833. The drama premiered in full on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1848 at Pesti Magyar Színház (Pest Magyar Theatre) after an interrupted premiere on the day the Revolution broke out on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1848.

<sup>5</sup> It was only fifty years after its publication that the piece premiered at the Serbian National Theatre on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1904.



J. S. Popović: *The Patriots*, Serbian National Theatre, Belgrade (Narodno pozorište u Beogradu) 2015, d: András Urbán (source: narodnopoziroiste.rs)

Serbia<sup>6</sup>. This play of his is based on historical fact. It debunks the double-faced and hypocritical Serbian nationalism and depicts time-serving as a mentality based on sheer interests. Naturally, since it is a good play by a good playwright, it is not concerned with a particular nationalism but with various aspects of nationalism and fake patriotism, which are, I suppose, generally familiar phenomena everywhere, not only in Serbia. What really makes the piece interesting from our point of view is that the drama takes place in 1848, during the Hungarian revolution, in Vajdaság (Vojvodina). Here Serbs can define themselves only in relation to Hungarians. The characters in the play are wearing a double cockade: the Serbian one on top of the Hungarian, or the other way round, just as dictated by changing conditions. The mentality of “Preletači” in Serbian political life today is similar to this. Depending on the changing political power relations, these people go over even to the opponent from one day to another, as if they were only changing socks. And at the level of social judgement this is considered to be absolutely normal, or often even expectable or praiseworthy. However, it is equally typical of the highest echelons of the political elite, too. Not to mention that after any such instance of party-switching, these politicians give voice to ideologies which stand diametrically opposed to the ones they used to speak for so savagely just a little while ago. This sort of mentality characterised the war period and traumas of the 1990s, too, when the opposing parties were mutually killing each other. Losses were substantial on either side and there has been no end to accusations ever since, while neither nation wants to admit that it has committed genocide. Instead, it is trying to escape from this unacceptable position in order to restore its national self-image. Similarly, it finds it hard to confess that twenty years’ mistaken policies have led to this. It is obviously painful for the viewers when songs on the stage awaken the national feeling in them, only to be mocked at and deconstructed immediately. Still, the final response is going to be some sort of identification. Wisdom, however, may also be born in the audience so that it can

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<sup>6</sup> Jovan Sterija Popović (1806–1856) was instrumental in founding the Serbian Academy of Sciences as well as the first Serbian-language theatre in Belgrade among other things.

see that too high a price had to be paid for our bigoted nationalism. Because people, even in Belgrade, are becoming aware of what kind of life they are forced to live day by day as a consequence.”

“Is *The Patriots* often played? Or is it a classic piece which has not yet been completely taken on?”

“Exactly. This play is rarely included in the repertoire, but sometimes it is brought back. It has been staged by great directors, too. However, it appears to be permanently on in the public mind. When we first started to discuss it with the actors, they said they had already played in very many similar productions. Then I suggested taking a look at the repertoires to see where exactly it was playing, or at least productions of similar subject were. And then it turned out that *The Patriots* had not at all been put on stage over the last five years. There are situations when something is present in the public consciousness not the way as it really is, in this case a lot of people, relying on their memories, have the sensation that this kind of critical attitude has been present on stages in Serbia, although this is not the case.”

“*This phenomenon is an example of myth formation concerning our relation to ourselves, to our national existence and character. One is often – or ab ovo, as it is in the nature of things? – characterised by a sort of double consciousness in this respect.*”

“Here in Serbia, a kind of schizophrenic condition can be observed in this regard, which results in a most peculiar identity, too. While certain signs of the process of democratisation appear in public life, there is a general tendency of returning to and treasuring as well as building on traditional values. Even the EU accession process, for example, is typified by two souls. This was clearly visible not long ago when a politician announced a law amendment for instance by referring to constraint imposed by the EU, saying that although this was not good for us, it was demanded from us by the EU. In Serbia – just like elsewhere in the region – value preferences and behavior patterns which were never considered to be European earlier have been kept up under the table on an ongoing basis. I use the past tense because we have, unfortunately, learned by now that these stereotypes reckoned as anachronistic are in fact very European. Nevertheless, we are still looking on Europe as a utopistic bag where we pack everything that we consider good and positive about human rights and liberty. However, even main stream politics itself has kept non-European contents alive in this country despite the fact that we have admittedly been travelling along the European road for ten years. So we must draw the conclusion that we have had a different idea of Europe from what it is really like.”

“*The satirical vision characteristic of Popovic is not unique on the Balkans. Ion Luca Caragiale (1852–1912)<sup>7</sup>, the Romanian national classic playwright, also has a criti-*

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<sup>7</sup> The author’s latest appearance at the Nemzeti Színház was by the comedy *Stormy Night* (*Zürzavaros éjszaka*), directed by István K. Szabó (premiere: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2013). The first MITEM in 2014 saw the play *Two Lottery Tickets* (*Két sorsjegy*), adapted from Caragiale’s short story, directed by Alexandru Dabija, performed by I. L. Caragiale National Theatre, Bucharest.

cal attitude toward the aping of Western bourgeois mentality, which only brings out even more the clumsiness, resulting from belatedness and provincialism, of this new-found democracy. Another striking parallel is that he only got canonised as a great national author after World War II, when the communist regime could take advantage of his comedies to discredit the civil establishment. It is also an interesting question whether this self-flagellant attitude has any continuation in contemporary drama when the situation in Europe is no less contradictory than it was some hundred and fifty years ago. Or is it rather the contemporary stage adaptations of classic authors only where this attitude is present?”

“In my case the fact that I, who deal with these issues, am a Hungarian stage director is only icing on the cake. It further enhances the significance of these contradictions. If I were not Hungarian, the Serbian right-wing would presumably feel different about the very same staging of mine – but I cannot judge it. A critic siding with the production wrote that I had already criticised Hungarian chauvinism, too, thus wishing to prove that I had the right to do so with respect to the Serbs as well. When it is exactly the other way round, with my activity basically being related to Serbian theatres – therefore I more often put what are regarded as Serbian classics on stage. As a citizen and tax-payer of Serbia, I have precisely the same right to deal with these issues as anyone of the majority nation. As for belonging to ethnic Hungarians, there is a reflex that one must huddle up and mind one’s own business. But what will happen if the choice happens to fall on a national classic, incidentally *Bánk bán*, at the ethnic Hungarians’ theatre in Újvidék? Its interpretation, similarly to that of works on the compulsory reading list anyway, usually gets trapped in the world of clichés. I always feel that we relate to these works, which are most valuable from the ethnic dimension, as if they were insignificant. Although we declare them to be significant, on the other hand we pretend they have never had anything to say. The subjects raised by them are treated on a gross and commercial basis and it is not asked why they have still become so important. These pieces are, in fact, all about something: they had something to say about man in their time, about the particular age and situation, and that is why we are touched by them even today. It was interesting in the case of *The Patriots* that the production was not attacked by the press on either political side. Yet it has the full list of today’s Serbian government. The press failed to react to this, but the audience did react. It is interesting, too, that one of the right-wing papers praised the play while distancing itself from me. At the same time, it felt the need of whitewashing the playwright. It said, for example, that Sterija Popović had gone overboard but he was not to be denounced for it, being the greatest playwright in Serbia and, as such, a national treasure.”

“Nowadays postdramatic theorists, with Hans-Thies Lehmann among them, have been continuously problematising the gap between the dramatic text of canonised classics and the texture as well as the changed social function of contemporary theatre.<sup>8</sup> And

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<sup>8</sup> Hans-Thies Lehmann’s (b. 1944) theoretical work, *Postdramatic Theatre (Postdramatisches Theater)*, was published in German in 1999 and in Hungarian in 2009 (*Poszt-dramatikus színház*, Balassi Kiadó).

some go so far as to say that theatre does not actually need literary texts today. When, if you come to think of it, the initiator and fulfiller of the European rise of the middle classes – despite lost revolutions – was the idea of a nation based on literary language. And this is what still holds us together as nation states today.”

“Those who have an aversion to the language of contemporary theatre usually use the phrase that they would like to see and hear genuine Shakespeare on the stage. But what do they mean by that? Not the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century Shakespearean theatre, but usually the diction of the middle class theatrical tradition at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Text in the theatre is not a political question but an aesthetic one. And in this respect it is difficult for conservative theatres to see that expectations of them do not in fact count. Or they do only inasmuch as these expectations ought to be regarded as a kind of a target. Since these clichés, prejudices and commonplaces are right there in the audience’s consciousness, too. Thus the stage director is offered the possibility of a common platform where dialogue may commence. However, theatre is theatre. It must be concerned with a given problem in our-present day life, even independently of the literary text. My conversations with modern dramaturges always boil down to that the context at the theatres of the Balkan region is not literary, like in Hungary or in Central Europe generally, but rather connected to the reality of the present. I think that theatre does not in general communicate within a literary system but with reality itself. I do not merely mean the written word here, but the entire set which literariness embraces and which mostly encroaches upon theatre itself as well. Many times, national theatres, which function as folk theatre here, cannot rid themselves of this very literariness. And that is the main reason why they remain provincial.”

“Today many people think that it is no longer possible to write historical drama. However, it was POSZT last year which could see the appearance of contemporary playwright Csaba Székely’s piece, *Vitéz Mihály* (Michael the Brave)<sup>9</sup>, which challenges age-old taboos in the direction of both Hungarians and Romanians concerning the immaculate Székelys and *Vitéz Mihály*, who was made to look like a ruler of European stature. This production, directed by Attila Béres, besides being eminently faithful to historical facts, conquers the audience by depicting, and mounting one on top of the other, the chaotic state of the world then and now through today’s deteriorated language, which, at the same time, is the source of murderous humour: it is capable of a simul-



<sup>9</sup> The protagonist of the production received an award at POSZT in 2015. See review by Katalin Keserü: POSZT 2015, *Szenárium*, October 2015, pp. 92–94.



Csaba Székely: *Vitéz Mihály*, Weöres Sándor Theatre, Szombathely, 2015, d: Attila Béres (source: vssz.hu)

*taneous caricature of bloody gothic drama, tragicomedy and historical figures, in, for example, representing the mass murderer Major-General Basta as a superhero action-movie star. Are there any similar works in contemporary Serbian dramatic literature?"*

*"There is a public belief in Serbian intellectual life that this community is able to take a self-critical stance. And although Serbian productions trying very serious-*

ly to do away with illusions and face recent events do appear on and off, I would not say that it is typical. When plays like that have entered the public consciousness they will reinforce the image that it is a free and democratic society, but this mentality still fails to take permanent hold in our reality."

*"Your staging in Újvidék of Neoplanta<sup>10</sup>10, where the characters have been referring to particular historical events that have occurred from the refoundation of the town up to the present days, but in a manner as if the events of the distant past were their own personal experience just as the incomprehensible traumas of the recent past are, is most interesting from this point of view. That is why we feel that this production is, in a certain sense, a documentary drama."*

"This performance, however, is a confrontation actually, a kind of utopian image of coexistence. While it enumerates facts which are problematic for each nationality – either the Serbian, German or Hungarian. In this region of former Yugoslavia, the clarification of wars related to the disintegration of the federation is still going on. The great deed in connection with that would be if the nations living in this region could account for their own guilt, as has already been mentioned above. But it is difficult also because the victims continue to be traded in political diplomacy, as if they were a kind of currency. That is why no nation can achieve the moment of realistic discontinuity, from which we could move on, in fact, the diametrical opposite is happening. In this production I go to the limits in the staging of political themes. But I must state that as a theater-maker I am not engaged in political activism like those who, referring to Lehmann's theory, cross this border over and over again - although I respect their work. As for documentarism, there has been a lot of abuse, such as when a particular company is talking about their own experiences on the stage. It does not matter, of course, whether

<sup>10</sup> The production was adapted from László Végel's novel of the same title at the Hungarian-language Novi Sad Theatre.

something has really happened so or you have just made it up, which is what writers also often get picked on for. It does not determine whether something will make theatre or not. The problem is that this kind of operation develops its own clichés, too. Just like in the case of stone theatre, which is often recognised as theatre only because we have got used to behaving properly in one. But actually we do not know who needs it or for what. More often than not it



Neoplanta – based on László Végh's novel: *Neoplanta, or the Promised Land*, d: András Urbán, Újvidéki Színház / The Novi Sad Theatre, 2014 (source: litera.hu)

does not transpire what a particular production has been created for. In this case the question arises whether there is still a social function attached to theatre other than people going to the theatre because they have been socialized to do so. This will not make art of theatre.”

*“Being born in 1970, you were ten when Tito died. And twenty-two when the war broke out in 1992. We know that over the past quarter century the Hungarian population in the Délvidék has halved. As a result, the recipient milieu and the institutional system in which you are making theatre has substantially transformed. The age range of the audience has changed as well.”*

“This is a very painful situation and you do not think of it every moment. I talk a lot with the actors during the rehearsal process about whether they still have some kind of a vision for the future. Because I cannot decide whether this concept has ceased to exist socially or historically, or it has just ceased to carry any significance to me, with the progress of biological time. It is possible that now we are living in a period when there is really no vision for the future, except perhaps in political discourse. For everyday people, even if they are well-off, life and everything related to the future have become unstable, especially since the economic crisis. We have no single tangible concept of what the future will hold. If we come to think of it, the situation is even more serious from a minority point of view. The other day I was talking to a local journalist in Zombor and he said that no Hungarian class would be launched in the city’s schools next year. And I still think of Zombor as a Hungarian town, while I have to realise that this has been unjustified for decades of course. Or take Szabadka (Subotica), where we are conceptualizing a theatrical educational programme, even though we are aware that the majority of today’s secondary school students will no longer be in the country in four years’ time. So we are experimenting to educate an audience of them in vain. When I, as a director, am recruiting new colleagues, it seems to me that only those have remained who fail to come up to the mark elsewhere, or have



Main street of Sombor in 1902 (source: levelezolap.hu)

very serious sentimental or private reasons to stay here. And not only Hungarian but also Serbian young people are leaving the country one after the other. This has been an ongoing trend since the very beginning of the nineties. The people who have represented intellectual life for us are disappearing, too. And with this, the specific quality of life which defined our daily lives is also changing.”

*“Still, as we are talking, I do not feel that you are bitter. But coarse and, if you like, provocative I would say, having seen your productions. Is this your reaction to what you are experiencing in the world around you? Or is it what constitutionally fits you? Or is it what also appeals to the Serbian audience in your stagings? As well as the theatres that find you?”*

“I do not know, but I have been socialized this way from the beginning. Perhaps I could compare my language to rock and roll or alternative music. Anyway, do not think that a theatre-maker should be over-subtle. After all, this is basically a harsh and boisterous art. And just as outspoken as poetry: it utters what hurts, what is clean and it causes pain so that we may be purified by it. But what makes me think that we must be tough? It is my conviction that one is not able to escape individual responsibility, not even when it comes to the election of leaders for example. After all, the Milosevic-es and Tudjmana-s never elected themselves and nor did a voting machine with a collective consciousness elect them, but it was responsible individuals, citizens in their own right who did so. Otherwise, I have never been concerned with why I am just the way I am. But I have always wondered why I am rejected by a section of the audience. Then I realized that they cannot forgive me that, at a certain moment, they are made to lose their feeling of comfort and do not know how to react. And I do not mean interactivity now, but the appearance on the stage of contents which the audience cannot make sense of, to which they have no socially sanctioned code. It is not that they do not understand something, but that they do not know how to behave in a given situation. Take, for instance, what happened in the case of *Bánk bán* at POSzT last year. At the end of the performance (but still as part of it) the question was asked of the audience what event would have to occur in the future Hungary (or in the country where we would be playing) for them to decide to leave the country. The prominent representatives of the right wing protested against posing this question and left the room shouting to the effect that this had nothing to do with Katona’s drama. When I think it is a most intimate question which we all ask ourselves, and which can naturally be answered by saying that un-

der no circumstances are we going to leave our country. So what kind of castration anxiety may be at the root of the belief that this subject is not to be broached even in such a playful form, while emigration from Hungary and Vojvodina has been on the rise? What is anyone hoping to gain by daring to restrict truthfulness on stage on ideological grounds? While the extent to which political public life has become shameless



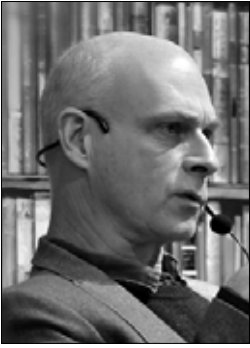
József Katona: *Bánk Bán*, Újvidéki Színház / The Novi Sad Theatre, 2014, d: András Urbán (photo: Srđan Doroški, source: uvszinhaz.com)

and brutal around us is such as today a public figure feels free to undertake and casually say something which formerly used to be a concept or strategy under the table only, but which apparently no one needs to be ashamed of at present...”

## “The Characters in the Play Are Wearing a Double Cockade.”

Zsolt Szász Talks to Director András Urbán

*The Patriots* directed by András Urbán (b. 1970) became the production of the season at the Serbian National Theatre, Belgrade, last year, while his provocative stage interpretation of József Katona’s *Bánk bán* was a success at the latest POSZT (Pécs National Theatre Festival). The managing editor of *Szcenárium* talked to the director apropos of the presentation of the former work at this year’s MITEM. Attempts by the participants at the two previous festivals to reformulate the question of the nature of national identity in a manner valid for the 21<sup>st</sup> century are brought to mind in the introduction. It is highlighted that last year also saw a forum with the participation of, beside theatre professionals from Russia, France and Hungary, representatives of the newly formed national theatres in Macedonia and Algeria, two young democracies. It transpired at the roundtable discussion that the institution of national theatre had a decisive role to play in this region of Europe even today. András Urbán and Zsolt Szász discuss the question whether what responsibility theatre and, within that, those national classics who, like the author of *The Patriots*, Jovan Sterija Popović (1806–1856), determine to this very day the self-image and national consciousness of the Serbs, have in the process of the democratisation of Serbian society in the war-stricken Balkans, where young nation states came into being after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. From several angles, András Urbán throws light on his conviction that as an ethnic Hungarian, who also takes on a Serbian identity as an artist, he must approach drama in an unconventional way, liberating it from the well-worn clichés of 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism, and explore its intrinsic values, including also the critical attitude they had to reflect upon their own time. As one among the professional materials focussing on MITEM, the full English version of the interview will be published in the April issue of *Szcenárium*.



MAGNUS FLORIN



# “We Are Never Actual Without Being Historical”

National Theatres’ Symposium 2015

To be a “national theatre” is now something given, not chosen. When Ingmar Bergman, artistic director in the 1960s was asked what he saw as the meaning of a national theatre, he just answered that for him it was merely a good pretext for making theatre.

Nowadays it would be difficult for an artistic director to get away with such an easy answer.

We recently had a panel debate at our theatre with two questions in the headline: What is Europe? Who is European? The challenges of national theatres must be seen in that context.

There are striking tensions inside the concept of “national theatre”, much through the effects of the fall of the wall 1989, but also with other specific reasons. Since Norway’s liberation from the forced union with Sweden in the beginning of the twentieth century, its National Theatre has had a unifying position that is very much different from the national theatres of Sweden and Denmark. In an earlier symposium here, we learned the story of Abbey Theatre, baptized as The National Theatre of Ireland. The National Theatre in Belgrade gained a strong position as the theatre became a place for the resistance towards the regime of Milosevic.

In the eighteenth and especially nineteenth centuries the concept of “national theatre” developed with not only idealistic nationalism, but also ideas of democratic evolution and citizenship – the meeting between stage and audience was a kind of parliament in itself, mirroring theatre’s early history at the theatres of an-

tique Greece. But as we have seen there are other more difficult aspects of the national.

Let us take a step towards a sunny holiday in Stockholm, and let us say you are a tourist asking in the street for the way to the “national theatre”. Probably or most likely most people will put up a blank face. If you ask for “The Royal Dramatic Theatre” they will be more helpful, better still if you use the short term “Dramaten”.

It is a theatre that has the assignment of being a national theatre for the spoken word, but you will never find the word “national” on the building or on the posters.

In fact, in the 1970s a rock band took the name “National Theatre” – a joking and ironic gesture, possible because the name was not actually used by anyone else.

The Royal Dramatic Theatre was founded in the end of the eighteenth century as a royal theatre, financed by the king himself, and after his death the parliament had to deal with it, more trouble than joy, with so minimal enthusiasm that for a period in the nineteenth century the subsidy was totally cancelled and the theatre was privately owned by the actors themselves, mostly playing French farces. The present building was built in 1908 by a private consortium of enterprises, with money from a lottery.

The nineteenth century, the heroic period of European nationalism and idealism, was in Sweden the period of heavy emigration and general mistrust towards national power institutions. The mistrust towards coupling “national” with “theatre” was not diminished during the first part of the twenties century. In a speech from the early sixties, the artistic director of the day asked sceptically: “What would be the eternal and obligatory not losable national values be, that our people, any people, would have to maintain and cherish, do they exist, the question is at stake in our times.”

The concept of “national theatre” was never stressed by the theatre itself, and it was not until the mid seventies that the department of culture officially formulated Dramaten’s status as a national theatre, in the letter of regulations that come with the money.

The concept of “national” has its pragmatic descriptive side. But the problematic dimensions in the word has been there from the start, and is there still more in a time when that kind of idealistic representation has fully shown its destructive ideological face.

“National” is one of the many scrutinized problematic words in a famous book by the Welsh author and pioneer in cultural studies, Raymond Williams. I am referring to his “Keywords; A vocabulary of culture and society”, a kind of critical dictionary with a whole series of widely used but difficult concepts that here are given their historic dimension, full of inner contradictions and tacit but lively meanings. Words such as Art, Common, Country, Ethnic, Existential, Modern, Racial, Realism, Sex and Tradition – just to say a few examples of other of his treated words in the centre of our culture. The term National (and Nation, Nationality, Nationalism etcetera) is shown to have its etymology in a latin word re-

ferring to breed and race, and having an ongoing history over the centuries that keep returning to complex matters of including or excluding.

Raymond Williams' perspective lets us consider how the inherent inclusive idea of a national theatre has an excluding dimension in it, depending on what you at any time will mean by "national".

So the meaning of "national" should be thoroughly reflected upon, not the least by people who earn their living at a National Theatre.

In a way it would be a relief to say that a modern national theatre should find its value and sense, not reflecting a nation, but rather in a wider international context. Would this imply that we should let go of the word, in favour of words as "international" and "global"?

After a debate at the theatre on the meaning of being a "national theatre", a newspaper asked its readers around in a quick inquiry: Shall Dramaten be a "national theatre"? There were four possible answers. Most of the people who answered – 69% – voted for 'Yes: it is needed for the cultural heritage'. While 8%



The building of Dramaten, the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm (source: wikipedia)

voted for "No, it is time to become a global theatre". While 14 % voted for "Privatize". And 9% said "Don't know". A quick newspaper inquiry with a few hundred responders, but still interesting. And note that the keywords of the alternatives are eminent keywords for Raymond William's study: Cultural, Heritage, Privatize, Global. An alarming thing is perhaps that the newspaper thought that a yes for a "national theatre" is necessarily connected to its relevance for the cultural heritage. A bit disappointing if you think the relevance should be there also

in the present, in connection to our lives and ideas and society just now.

The challenge for a "National Theatre" is to receive all the rewarding privileges and advantages that come with the naming and commission as a National Theatre, and at the same time be able to maintain a critique of the very concept, in an intellectually honest way.

If we have learned all the lessons from philosophies of otherness, from Julia Kristeva's focusing on the notion of "strangers" and Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak's perspectives on the postcolonial global world – how does it actually affect how we define ourselves as national theatres?

Kristeva – the French-Bulgarian philosopher, literary critic and psychoanalyst – who in her study "Strangers to ourselves" discussed the image of the foreigner,

the alien, the exile, the outsider in a country and society not their own. She started off in Greek tragedy and moved on through the bible and renaissance, through Montaigne, Montesquieu and Diderot to our present days. She writes: "The foreigner is something hidden in ourselves, something with the potentiality to destroy 'home' and something that is beyond 'understanding' or relations with each other." In a way she is psychoanalyzing Europe, coupling unifying, secluding and nationalistic powers – an in-side – with the projecting of a threatening alien outside. But in reality the stranger is in ourselves.

And Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak, the Calcutta-born philosopher, professor at Columbia in "Comparative Literature and society", who was the pioneer of post-colonial studies with her "Can the subaltern speak", what can we learn from her collection of essays titled "An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization"? Perhaps that the imagined unifying, universalistic including ideas of a globalized world has a backside of real concrete inequality and a forgetfulness of the specific and local. Who rules the universe of universality?

Why would Global be more including and less excluding than Nation? That is a question.

Another perspective, very concrete, from the taxpayers view. In what does a "national theatre" of our time find its legitimacy? It's not just a question of aesthetic and cultural justification, it's also an immediate matter of finance. Why should the tax payers keep financing heavily subsidized large institutions like Dramaten?

Perhaps we have been accustomed to think of the legitimacy as in some way eternally fixed? While the actual culture and society is in rapid process of metamorphosis, radically changing the basis for our institutions. A few years back we had a meeting in an international theatre network on the topic of "high culture" versus "subculture". The claim of a national theatre would be to be part of a high-culture, that is inviting and addressing itself to the whole of society, regardless of how many people at a given time actually come to see our productions, may it be Shakespeare or Ibsen or Gombrowicz or something contemporary. While a subculture is by definition a secluded culture within another, larger culture, not claiming to setting standards for the rest of society, on the contrary, it is only valid for its adherents and serves to shut out others. What happens if the cultural, political situation is so radically changed that the former high culture tends to become a subculture – one subculture among others? A special interest for a large but limited group of people, not relevant for the whole of society? Then the term "national" in "National Theatre" has become really problematic.

The situation and context of Dramaten and our theatres are radically different now, compared to just a few decades ago. Sweden is different, Europe is something else, the world has changed. When an ordinary school class in Stockholm can consist of pupils that have twenty different mother tongues, a national theatre's reflections on the word "national" will be thoroughly affected, as well as how topics such as language and cultural heritage are to be dealt with. What are we representing

on our venues, in terms of repertory and – important – the consistence of the ensemble, the cast of actors on stage? Are their names still Sven and Anders and Birgitta and Kerstin, or do we find also Karim, Ana Gil, Ardalan, Hamadi, Marall, and Bahar? Well, yes, the ones I just mentioned are on our venues.

It is perhaps a banal truism to say that the overall idea of our subsidized cultural institutions has its foundation in linking aesthetics with ethics, and with politics and social formation. This was the focal point of Friedrich Schiller's "On the Aesthetic Education of Man", of the late eighteenth century, claiming aesthetic formation as crucial for the society's and its citizens' ability of judgement, empathy and sociability. It is just this work that Spivak refers to in her title "An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization". She criticizes his idealistic aesthetics but basically she uses the intellectual framework that he gave. We may have distanced ourselves from Schiller's views on beauty etcetera, but didn't he point out a field still valid and crucial? The aesthetic as a stage for society's formation and self-reflection, with continuous experiences from Aischylos to Jelinek. Theatre as mediating, societal. Is this something to overcome, an unnecessary heritage? I would say it is something to maintain and give new meanings to. What would the alternative be? At the same time observing that "mediation" and "societal" are two of the keywords of Raymond Williams.

I notice among European theatres an attention on the physical space of theatre. The theatre's actual building, what goes on there before and after the show, introductions and talks, readings, debates, all kinds of extras, filling the house. The audience discovers that there are things going on before, after and next to the usual performances – a whole series of activities that gain their special quality from taking place in the specific public space of a theatre – the theatre as something that has the power to link the personal to the societal, the subjective with the common, individuality with citizenship.

Several theatres have started their own departments for these activities, they may have a name like extras, or plus, and that goes for us too. A large number of debates have been held at our venues, with contemporary themes and topics such as Solidarity, Integrity, Class, Unemployment, the situation for the Roma people. Nationalism was also one of the topics, as well as the mentioned What is Europe, Who is European. One could add: And who is not?

One topic for this symposium is "the actuality of a national theatre". We like to talk about the actuality of a play or an author, especially in advertisements and press material. But what is it to have "actuality"? Do I have actuality. We could move the question around and discover that we are never actual without being historical, and it may be a profounder task to see the historic context in a situation of actuality.

Is it a matter of actuality or sense of history that strikes us when we stage Dostoevsky's "The Idiot" at our main venue, in a modern adaption dealing with the topic of goodness – and on the very entrance stairs of our theatre homeless EU-immigrants are sleeping.



Participants of the third international symposium of Warsaw National Theatre in the Polish National Gallery on 26 November 2015. (amateur photograph)

Back to Raymond Williams and his cultural key words. Nation, National, Nationality, Nationalism, Nationalize. National feeling can often be regarded as natural and good, while nationalist feelings are regarded as constructed and bad. What is the difference?

Nation and native goes back to words for birth and breed. So “The birth of a nation” would mean: “The birth of something born”.

“National theatre” is not something newly born, and it is not something chosen, we have it, and it is our task to make a sense of it. There are challenges for national theatres in society, but we know also that theatre is a challenge for society.

### **Magnus Florin: “We Are Never Actual Without Being Historical”**

Swedish author and dramaturge Magnus Florin (b. 1955) has been the head of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm since 2009. The paper published here was presented at the “National Theatres’ Symposium 2015” in Warsaw in November last year. In it the conviction is expressed that national theatres have not lost their *raison d’être* in the 21st century, either. “To be a ‘national theatre’ is now something given, not chosen” says the author in the introductory paragraph. Then several questions ensue by which he would like to address those of his contemporaries who think responsibly as well as the theatrical profession as a whole: “Who rules the universe of universality?” “Why would Global be more including and less excluding than Nation?” As a follower of Schiller’s idea of theatre, he confesses to “The aesthetic as a stage for society’s formation and self-reflection, with continuous experiences from Aischylos to Jelinek. Theatre as mediating, societal.” He continues by posing further questions and making an attempt to answer them also: “Is this something to overcome, an unnecessary heritage? I would say it is something to maintain and give new meanings to. What would the alternative be?” He concludes the paper in this spirit: “National theatre’ is not something newly born, and it is not something chosen, we have it, and it is our task to make a sense of it.” (The essay is based on notes taken during his presentation at the Warsaw Conference and are published unedited.)



NINA KIRÁLY



# The Krakow Ulysses

## Before the Tadeusz Kantor's Retrospective Exhibition

It is a well-known fact that in a theatre everything happens *hic et nunc* and in spite of the development of the contemporary media the recordings cannot really substitute the excitement, the sadness or the admiration that can be the results of direct encounters between the actors and the audiences. That is the main reason why it is an important task for the participants of productions, primarily for theatre historians to prepare precise descriptions of theatrical events and also to position them in a narrower ethnical or a broader international context. This is the only way how created values can be preserved, the continuity of traditions can be secured and the old and new means of periodical explorations can be taken into account. This is how it is referred to in the first lines of the manifest titled *To Save from Oblivion* by Kantor:

My productions  
The Dead Class,  
Wielopole, Wielopole,  
Let the Artists Die,  
And this last one, I Shall Never Return  
All of them  
are personal confessions.

Personal confession...  
an unusual and rare  
technique today.  
In our epoch  
of increasingly collective life,  
a terrifying growth of collectivism,  
a rather awkward and  
inconvenient technique.<sup>1</sup>

However, these lines and the titles of his lectures make us conclude that the Artist's individual fate is inseparable from historical events, eternity, and the great questions of life and death in Kantor's art.

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<sup>1</sup> Cp. Tadeusz Kantor *Save from Oblivion* (Translated by Nina Király and Ágnes Pálfi). In: *Halálszínház (Death Theatre)* by Tadeusz Kantor, Prospero-Könyvek, Budapest-Szeged, 1994, 225.



However, these lines and the titles of his lectures make us conclude that the Artist's individual fate is inseparable from historical events, eternity, and the great questions of life and death in Kantor's art.<sup>2</sup>

In 2015 in Poland and all around the world the one hundredth anniversary of Kantor's birth and the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death was celebrated. These anniversaries coincide with the date of moving Kantor's museum, the Cricoteca to a new building on the bank of the River Vistula, where this collection was moved from its former location at 5 Kanonicza which is situated below the Wavel. Now the new museum provides enough room for a permanent exhibition. For the jubilee several valuable monographs were published which are dedicated to various periods of the Kantor career. The most exciting publication seems to be the dictionary of Kantor's artistic terms (Katarzyna Tokarska-Stangret: *Pokój wyobraźni. Słownik Tadeusza Kantora*. Warszawa, 2015).

One of the most prominent artists of the Polish and European avant-garde celebrated his 75th birthday in 1990, just a few months before his death, and at the same time the 35th anniversary of the CRICOT 2 Theatre, which was established in 1955 by Kantor. It is an interesting numerological observation that while in Jerzy Grotowski's life many important events are related to number six, in Kantor's life number five seems to be significant. What is common in both of them is that in Hungary neither Grotowski's, nor Kantor's productions could be watched by the audience. Therefore the exhibition opened on 14 March 1990 in Budapest Gallery is of great importance as Kantor's drawings and theatrical objects were displayed there. Kantor visited Budapest in November 1986 while he was going from New York to Thessaloniki and he met the representatives of theatres and fine arts as

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Tadeusz Kantor *Save from Oblivion*, 228.

well as some students in the R Club of SZKÉNY Theatre (the script of the interview may be read in *Kultúra és Közösség* (Culture and Community) 1987/1); at the same time Kantor gave a short interview to the *Stúdió* programme on television). Following this there were a lot of exchanges of letters between the CRICOT 2 and Katona József Theatre in order to organise a tour, however, due to financial reasons this plan did not come off. Kantor took delight in sampling his childhood favourite strudli (strudel) in the Buda Castle. The reason why he reminisced of the delicacy is that Wielopole, the town where Tadeusz Kantor was born on 6 April 1915 used to belong to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

The *Színház* (Theatre) periodical published the formerly mentioned Manifest by Kantor under the title *To Save from Oblivion* translated by Jolán Cservenits in May 1990; also the description of 35 episodes intended to be the a “guidance” to the score of the production *I Will Never Return* as well as my essay, *The Krakow Ulysses* about the international conference which was held between 9 and 11 April at Jagellonian University, where Kantor wanted to show his last play *Today is My Birthday* to the international audience. This was meant to be the first *Académie Expérimentale des Théâtres* session dedicated to Kantor.

In the 1990/4 issue of the *Kultúra és Közösség* (Culture and Community) some very interesting materials were published *In memoriam Tadeusz Kantor 1915–1990*. This is also where the famous interview with Tadeusz Kantor on January 25, 1990 press conference was recorded with the significant sentence of “I rather believe in art than in life...”. *Kantor and the European Avantgard* by László Beke was also published here. László Beke must have met Kantor’s actors in Paris, and even with Kantor in 1976; some time later he had the opportunity to view a live performance of *The Dead Class*. István Eörsi wrote a memorable essay about this production in *ÉS*. According to László Beke – who was close to Miklós Erdély’s circles – if the Hungarian audience could have been introduced to Kantor’s works any earlier it could have made a great impact on Hungarian art. Analysing the 60-s and 70-s László Beke has identified a lot of common features; for instance one of the most important expressions in Kantor’s manifests “the hole in reality” is very similar to the definition of art as an “empty place” in the *Marly-i tézisei* (*Theses of Marly*) by Miklós Erdély.

There is another example for a similar comparison, the dialogue between Andrzej Wajda and Miklós Jancsó published in *Dialog* periodical (1972), in which Wajda raises the question: How could it be explained why in both of their cases their very first movies (*Ashes and Diamonds*, *Kanal* by Wajda and *Szegény legények* (*The Poor Outlaws*), *Csillagosok, katonák* (*The Red and the White*) were crowned with the greatest success abroad while these productions were all models of the Polish as well as the Hungarian historical developments. According to Jancsó the irregular and stormy history in Central Europe results in an unimaginably intense form and an ultimately concise expression of basic existential situations and these situations highlight the eternal and general tragic aspects of humanity which can hardly ever be so palpable in the civilizational transmissions of “normal” Western European development models.

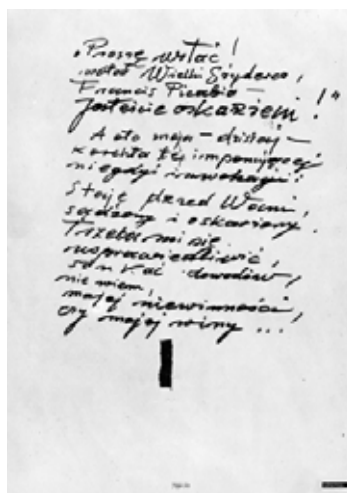
The closing lines of Kantor's above-mentioned manifest also coincide with this, but here they refer to the stage:

I am onstage.  
 I will not be a performer.  
 Instead, poor fragments of my own life  
 will become  
 "ready-made objects"  
 Every night  
 RITUAL  
 and SACRIFICE  
 will be performed here.

*Krakow, March 1986*

It has been a very special gift in my life and my teaching career that for five years from 1984 to 1990 I could work as a visiting professor at the Theatrology Department in the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. This was the period of time when Tadeusz Kantor was preparing his last three productions: *Let the Artists Die; I Shall Never Return; Today is my Birthday*. I could follow up all the rehearsals at Cricot 2, moreover I had the opportunity to take part in conferences in Italy and France, and also to attend symposiums and exhibitions dedicated to Kantor in Poland. Furthermore, there were a few times when even Kantor himself showed me his favourite paintings and commented on them in the Museum of Krakow. It was great pleasure for me when – since Kantor had decided to abdicate his publishing rights – I together with László Beke managed to edit and then with the co-operation of MASZK Association in Szeged we managed to publish Kantor's scripts under the title *Death Theatre* in 1994, on whose cover both the hand-drawing and the main title are created by Kantor.

The Kantor Exhibition which is being prepared for this year's MITEM will hopefully attract great interest as it was he and Jerzy Grotowski who determined the development and



poetics of the second half of the 20th century theatre perhaps to the greatest extent.

In this grand exhibition at every level of the Budapest National Theatre there will be displays of photos, pictures, video recordings of productions from Kantor's various periods of art: the "informel", the "impossible", the "zero" and the "happening" theatre. Owing to our Polish partners – the Cricot Museum and the Polish Institute in Budapest the real objects of the Kantor's productions can be seen: the mannequins at their desks of *The Dead Class*, the wardrobe, a boy on a bicycle. The Polish curator of the MITEM, Justyna Michalik theatrical historian who has made arrangements for several Kantor exhibitions in Poland and internationally as co-worker in Cricot published a monograph about Kantor's happening-period in 2015. The opening ceremony of the exhibition will take place at 6pm on April 12. The Metamorphosis –the Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre round table discussion dedicated to Tadeusz Kantor's art will be held from 3-6pm on April 15 with the participation of several Hungarian and internationally renowned researchers.

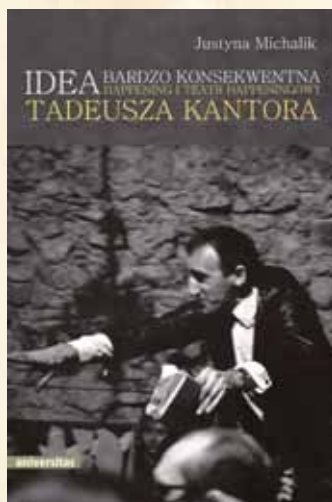


The writer of the article at the introduction of her book *The Theatre of Death* in a bookshop (Irók Boltja) in 1994. (The photo belongs to Nina Király)

## Nina Király: The Krakow Ulysses

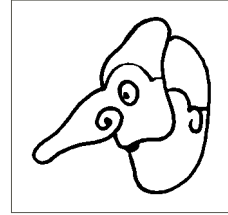
### Before Tadeusz Kantor's Retrospective Exhibition

This year's MITEM is to see Tadeusz Kantor's retrospective exhibition. The author of the essay which wishes to attune to the event, Nina Király, was a visiting professor at the department of theatre studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow between 1984 and 1990, and was a personal acquaintance of Tadeusz Kantor, preparing for his three last productions during those years. The essay reveals that she, in collaboration with László Beke, edited Kantor's texts and had them published in Hungarian under the title *Halálszínház* (*The Theatre of Death*) by the MASZK Egyesület (MASZK Association) in Szeged in 1994, with the cover illustration and the main title of the volume by Kantor himself. Now, as the organiser of the extensive exhibition at MITEM, the theatre historian provides important information chiefly on the reception of Tadeusz Kantor in Hungary.





EDIT KULCSÁR



# The Road from Reality to Stage Magic

A Close-up of Hungarian Theatres Outside Hungary  
and Theatres in Romania

It was a long while before when I last felt as deliberated, elevated and (let me say) “happy” as during the last year festival in Kisvárda. I enjoyed the productions staged by Hungarian theatres outside Hungary, and I was impressed that any drama workshop seemed to be consistent to their special approaches. *Self-identification* is the term that I would describe them with after the professional discussions which proved to be great opportunities to talk sincerely with the companies and the creators about the professional ups and downs. Hungarian theatres outside Hungary are organic parts of their countries’ (Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Ukraine) “majority” theatrical cultures, they pay attention to them, acknowledge their efforts and regularly work together with Romanian, Serbian, Ukrainian and Slovakian artists. Whatever the political situation is like in these countries, there is co-operation in cultural life among theatres. And it should be like this since a Hungarian living outside Hungary is born into two (or sometimes even three) cultures, therefore is familiar with not only the majority’s language, but also knows its habits and cultural values. These days most of the actors of theatres have become relatively young adults since the changes in the political system and there has been a healthy generational change in the managements of theatres as well. Youthful spirit, open-mindedness, curiosity and willingness for co-operation is palpable in the repertoires of these theatres and networks. The Kisvárda Festival attempts to be an arena, parade and meeting point for this extremely rich, constantly renewing, dynamic world of theatres.

I similarly enjoy taking part in Romanian theatrical festivals. I regularly go back to Bucharest for the national festival, unfortunately I can more rarely attend other festivals such as the ones in Sibiu, Craiova and Timisoara. I have very often had the impression in Romanian festivals that even the weaker productions are still professionally competent and the performances with concrete political messages are unbiased. In my opinion cultural life in Romania is very sound, the productions show our world and the most current issues in a very creative and adequate way to our age. Although there maybe extreme values in politics or civil life, however, the world of theatres come up with creations at a different level, at the intellectual level suiting the mentality of culture and defines itself, we must say: in a very rewarding way. In the middle of the last century after the second world war Romanian theatres started off from the same level as any other theatres in the neighbouring countries. The communist ideology based system did not make a favourable impact on creativity in Romania, neither did it in any other countries belonging to the Eastern bloc. In the middle of the 1950-s a dialogue was initiated among theatre people for the “retheatralisation” of theatres. Liviu Ciulei published his essay with the title *The Theatralisation of Stage-Setting* in the Teatrul (Theatre) periodical in 1956, in which he expressed his preference of poetic-dramatic stage-setting instead of sticking to reality. At that time he was a young actor, also architect, he started to work as a director in the theatre and became famous throughout Europe. Ciulei and his contemporaries, directors in theatres and films were revolting against imitated naturalism and demanded that a director should be creative, a style-setter and fond of experimenting. “The intention of creating *everything* leads straight to the limitations of the audience’s imagination in the art of the theatre. The creative professional expertise mostly lies in the ability of how by grabbing one element of the whole that one bears in mind and while relying on the supplementary imagination of the audience he is able to make allusions.”<sup>1</sup> In a few years’ time under his direction the Bulandra Theatre had become the most promising art theatre in Romania, with an excellent company and directors (David Esrig, Lucian Pintilie, Radu Penciulescu). Ciulei regarded it as relevant to renew the stage as well as the theatre halls in order to achieve an even more intense relationship between the audience and the actors. Owing to his initiative, one of the stages at Bulandra Theatre was converted into a space that could be adapted to each individual play. While Ciulei primarily took responsibility for creating a perfect, almost a picture-like stage setting, David Esrig was rather interested in staging an intense and statuesque show, while Lucian Pintilie attempted to combine the previous two methods in a very dynamic way basing it on the requirement for theatrical truth. It was also typical of the generations of directors following them that they tended to take advantage of every opportunity to undermine the complexity of potential expressions in a theatre,

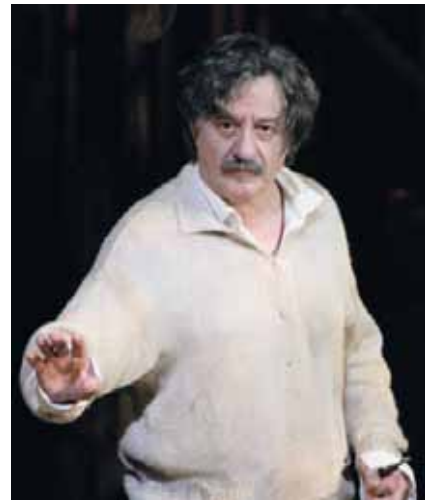
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<sup>1</sup> Liviu Ciulei: The retheatralisation of stage (Translated by Mária Albert) <http://www.jatekter.ro/?p=9558>

which may have resulted in continuous experiments with expressive forms even within one director's life.

It demonstrates the multiplicity of Romanian theatres that in every town that has a theatre, festivals are organised mostly with foreign participants. Several festivals had been held traditionally even before the political system was changed (eg. Romanian drama festival in Timisoara, studio theatre festival in Oradea), but most of them were started later. The most prominent festival for Romanian theatres, the FNT (Festivalul National de Teatru-National Festival of Theatres) has been organised for 25 years in Bucharest by UNITER (Uniunea Teatrala din Romania, the Theater Union of Romania), which was established in the first year of the new political system.

The UNITER is so independent and professional that its members are not the institutions but the individuals who work for theatres. This union is managed by Ion Caramitru, who is one of the most significant Romanian actors, performing artists and directors; he is responsible for the complexity of its structure that covers every aspect of theatrical life, its whole operation, and last but not least it is also his merit that it has become such a respectable association that he also found a venue and sponsorship for. Currently Caramitru acts as the director of the National Theatre. He has had the building of the Bukarest National Theatre renovated, as a result of which perhaps the most enormous theatrical complex of Europe can be found at the heart of the Romanian capital. The UNITER sets up a great gala event annually (which is broadcast by the main Romanian television channel) and presents the professional awards of the year based on the opinions of a great number of well-reputed professionals in an environment intentionally made to bear a comparison with the Oscar award winning ceremony. It also refers to the complexity of Romanian theatres that besides the usual awards for the productions (best performance, director, actor, designer) the most outstanding theatrical shows on radio and television and the best critic of the year are also acknowledged. Life achievements award, special awards, awards for productions in circuses, children's theatres and puppet theatres are also handed out. Awards are given for best choreography, the composition of theatre music, or prominent achievements in the musical theatre. The best



Ion Caramitru, managing director of Caragiale National Theatre of Bucharest, in the role of Prospero, at MITEM 2015, Budapest (photo: Augustine Bucur)



drama of the year also receives an award. The nationwide festival has become a real celebration of the best performances of the year without a jury and awards. In the autumn of 2015, the director and editor of the 25<sup>th</sup> jubilee festival was Marina Constantinescu, who invited more than as usual, altogether forty performances –including two representative foreign ones (one German and one Russian) to the capital. She said the following about her task of picking the participant for the festival: “Travelling around Romania to select productions for the FNT I had the impression of experiencing the phantasmagoria of the country. It was lively and motionless, European and provincial, modern and conservative at the same time. I have seen a Romania that basically hardly anybody ever talks about. And very few people are interested in what is happening there. I have rediscovered that the way from reality to fiction that one may experience in a theatre is the sign of normality. This is the way to our real selves. Theatre is about what we live through intensively and variably, about the country and the present moment of history.”

The greatest festival of theatres in Romania is undoubtedly the one held in Sibiu, which was organised for the first time twenty-two years ago, then eight productions were invited from three countries. By 2015 it had become a megafestival representing all kinds of arts with the participation of seventy countries and four hundred and twenty-six events at sixty-six locations. Constantin Chiriac, the theatre and festival director, who also turned out to be an excellent manager, was able to make even his boldest dreams come true. By today due to the international reputation of the festival eighty per cent of its budget is provided by international co-operations and European Union funds. Productions by renown personalities of the world theatre (Eimuntas Nekrosius, Peter Stein, Lev Dogin, Krystian Lupa, Declan Donellan, Oskaras Korsunovas)



J. W. Goethe: *Faust*, Radu Stanca National Theatre, Sibiu/Szeben, Romania, 2007, d: Silviu Purcărete (photo: Paul Băilă, source: trns.ro)

world famous Romanian theatre personalities stage shows in co-operation with the local company of Sibiu. Just to mention a few examples, *Faust* by Purcărete, the *Metamorphoses*, and quite recently *Gulliver's Travels* were staged here and these performances were crowned with success all around the world from England to Japan. The festival in Sibiu features a wide range of events (street theatres, dances, concerts, exhibitions, productions staged by universities of acting, a fair

of shows) and I would also like to highlight professional conferences, reading theatres and book presentations. Even the first few festivals offered reading shows at theatres, and the contemporary plays presented here were printed in bilingual books. Later conference materials which were based on the presentations of se-

rious experts were also printed out, then since 2006 the festival organisers have had a lot of prominent foreign theatre books translated and published in co-operation with Romanian publishing houses.

The first piece of the series was a book by the famous Russian critic Marina Davidova under the title of *The End of a Theatre Epoch* (*Konyec tyeatralnoj epohi*), which examines the current situation of the Russian theatre. In 2015 two books – *My Paris* (*Parisul personal*), which is the second part of his autobiographical essays, and another book about the Japanese theatre were published by George Banu, the well-known critic and writer in Paris; the dictionary for theatres under the title of *1001 definitions of Theatre* (*Les 1001 définitions du Théâtre*) by French playwright and director Olivier Py as well as a bilingual book (*Sfârșitul regiei, începutul creației colective în teatrul european-The End of Directing. The Beginning of Theater-Making and Devising in European Theatre*) in which essays and interviews can be found about trends in alternative theatre-making in Romania and Europe. A festival is always organised around an important and current topic, such as tolerance, aggression, cultural identity, creativity, energies, communities, crisis, dialogue, individualism in multiplicity. The festival in 2016 is advertised with the slogan *Building Trust*.

Our relationship with the Romanian theatre is regarded as very important. It was a very special occasion for the company of the Budapest National Theatre when it had an opportunity to co-operate with Silviu Purcăreté and his excellent



Ovid: *Metamorphoses*, Radu Stanca National Theatre, Sibiu/Szeben, 2009, d: Silviu Purcărete (photo: Scott Eastman, source: tnrs.ro)



An adaptation of J. Swift's *Gulliver*, Radu Stanca National Theatre, Sibiu/Szeben, 2012 (source: tnrs.ro)



W. Shakespeare: *As You Like It*, National Theatre, 2014, d: Silviu Purcărete (photo: Zsolt Eöri Szabó)



W. Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night, or What you Will*, Tamási Áron Theatre, St. Gheorge, Romania, 2015, d: László Bocsárdi (photo: Zsolt Barabás, source: mitem.hu)

colleagues<sup>2</sup> and MITEM features Romanian productions in its programme every year. The National Theatre Bucharest has been invited twice to Budapest, during the first festival they staged play by the legendary Romanian playwright, Caragiale, while on the second occasion Ion Caramitru in the role of Prospero was celebrated by the enthusiastic audience in Budapest. This year a

very exclusive production is invited, which was a coproduction of the Sibiu Theatre Festival and the prestigious Edingbourg Festival in 2012, and ever since has become sweeping success all around the world: *Gulliver's Travels*. Silviu Purcărete's theatrical vision is the "grand version of grotesque", "the pictures are very often shocking, however, always memorable" – as the English critics noted it regards to the tour of the production in England. The other Romanian performance in the 2016 MITEM is by Hungarian director, László Bocsárdi, who is ranked among the best directors by Romanian theatre experts, too. Bocsárdi with his drama group from Szepsiszentgyörgy (Sfanthu Gheorghe) had an overwhelming success when they showed Moliere's *The Misanthrope* to the Budapest audience. This year they are staging a Shakespeare masterpiece, the *Twelfth Night*, after *Hamlet*, with a leisurely approach... Two years ago Bocsárdi was awarded the best director by UNIT-ER for staging *Hamlet*, at the same time the best production award went to Silviu Purcărete's production in Cluj-Napoca. It is quite obvious that in the Romanian theatre the main propelling force is the liberty of creativity.

<sup>2</sup> Silviu Purcărete directed *As You Like It* by Shakespeare in 2014 in the National Theatre; with scenic designer Helmut Stürmer, composer Vasile Şirli, customs designer Dragoş Buhagiar.

### **Edit Kulcsár: The Road from Reality to Stage Magic**

A Close-up of Hungarian Theatres Outside Hungary and Theatres in Romania In the present paper Edit Kulcsár, dramaturge at the Nemzeti Színház (National Theatre), expert on Romanian theatre as well as Hungarian-language theatres across the border, gives an overview of the most important theatre festivals in Romania. She highlights the significance of the intellectual fermentation which began at the end of the fifties, due to which theatre (in the Romanian and Hungarian languages) in Romania reached international standards after the end of the communist regime. Finally she sums up which productions and professional programmes indicated the presence of this theatre culture at the earlier two MITEMs and, also, who the invited guests are going to be at this year's festival: Silviu Purcărete and *Gulliver's Travels* as well as László Bocsárdi and his staging of *Vízkereszt (Twelfth Night)*.



BALOGH GÉZA



# Avantgárd színház Kelet-Európában

Lengyelország, 3. rész

## Tadeusz Kantor és a Cricot 2

„Minden előadásom / *A halott osztály* / a *Wielopole, Wielopole* / a *Vesszenek a művészek!* / és ez az utolsó / a *Soha többé nem térek ide vissza* / egytől egyig / személyes vallomás”<sup>1</sup> – írja hazai és nemzetközi sikerei csúcán Tadeusz Kantor, a lengyel és az európai avantgárd színház egyik legjelentősebb alkotója a *Megmenteni a feledéstől* című önvallomásában, 1988 márciusában. Az elemzők szerencséjére sokat és szívesen írt, így életművében könnyű eligazodni, támpontokat találni. Legfeljebb a bőség zavarát kell gondos körültekintéssel leküzdeni. Ő az összefoglalója mindannak, amit Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński, Wyspiański és Leon Schiller megálmodott, megteremtett, és ő volt a lengyelek között az első, akinek a világszínház teljes jogú állampolgáraként sikerült bekerülnie a nemzetközi köztudatba. Életművére nemcsak honfitársai és más országok megszállott polonistái próbálják felhívni a figyelmet, hanem minden színházzal foglalkozó alkotó és tudós számára ugyanazt jelenti, amit a nagy nemzeti kultúrák bármelyikének kiemelkedő színházteremtői.

1915. április 6-án született Marian Kantor-Mirski és Helena Berger második gyermekeként, Lengyelország dél-keleti csücskében, az ukrán határ mellett fekvő Kárpátaljai vajdaságban, egy Wielopole Skrzyńskie nevű, akkor 700 lakost számlá-

<sup>1</sup> Tadeusz Kantor: *Halálszínház*. Bp., – Szeged, 1994. 225. Király Nina és Pálfi Ágnes fordítása.



Wielopole főtere 1910-ben, a kép bal oldalán alul: Stanisław Berger, Helena és Marian Kantor (forrás: culturehub.co)

ló falucskában. Wielopole történelme a 11. századig, Merész Boleszláv koráig nyúlik vissza. Sajátossága, hogy már 1641-től kezdtek ide betelepülni zsidók, akik hamarosan zsinagógát is építettek. „Wielopole Skrzyńskie – a főutca egyik oldalán a katolikus templom, a plébánia, a keresztény temető, a másikon a zsinagóga, a zsidó temető meg a zsidók keskeny síkatorainak sora húzódott. A két oldal békés szimbiózisban élt egymással”<sup>2</sup> – emlékezik egyik nyilatkozatában

Kantor. A katolikus plébánia volt a gyerekszobája, ahol korábban anyja is gyerekeskedett özvegy édesanyjával, mikor annak féltestvére, a wielopolei plébános (később esperes) befogadta őket. A helyhez illően a gyerekeket, Tadeuszt és nővérét mélyen vallásos, katolikus szellemben nevelték, de ők a purimot, a pészáchot, a jom kipurt és a hanukát épp olyan természetességgel együtt tartották pajtásaikkal, mint a katolikus szentek ünnepeit. (Ez a kettős hatás később gyakran visszatér Kantor műveinek jelképrendszerében.)

Apját csak fényképről ismeri. Marian Kantor az első világháború kitörésekor bevonul katonának, a Piłsudski-légióban<sup>3</sup> harcol. A háború után nem tér vissza Wielopoléba, Sziléziába költözik, új családot alapít. Részt vesz a sziléziai felkelésekben<sup>4</sup>, kereszténydemokrata politikus, lapszerkesztő. A német megszállás alatt az ellenállási mozgalomban harcol.

A nagybácsi halála után, 1921-ben Helena Kantor a gyerekekkel elhagyja a parókiát és a szomszédos vajdaságba, Bem szülővárosába, Tarnówba költözik. Tadeusz itt kezdi meg tanulmányait a tanítóképző gyakorló elemi iskolájában. 1925-től gimnáziumi tanuló. Még érettségi előtt barátságot köt Julian Smietana plébánossal, aki megkéri, hogy készítsen néhány szentképet a plébániatemplom számára. Ez az első komoly megbízatás az egyre eltökéltebben festőnek készülő ifjú életében.

<sup>2</sup> Idézi a 2013 novemberében *Tadeusz Kantor és Wielopole Skrzyńskie* címmel a művész egykori műtermében, a Sienna utca 7/5-ben megrendezett krakkói emlékkiállítás katalógusa.

<sup>3</sup> Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935) lengyel marsall. 1892-től a Szocialista Párt jobbszárnyának egyik vezéralakja, majd vezetője. Légiója 1914–16-ban Németország oldalán részt vesz az Oroszország elleni hadjáratokban. 1918-ban fontos szerepet játszik Lengyelország függetlenné válásában. 1918 és 1922 között a Második Lengyel Köztársaság első államfője és a hadsereg főparancsnoka. 1923-ban visszavonul, majd 1926-tól haláláig hadügyminiszter, 1926–28-ban és 1930-ban egyidejűleg miniszterelnök.

<sup>4</sup> A versailles-i békeszerződés értelmében a népszövetségi tanács felosztotta Sziléziát Csehszlovákia és Lengyelország között. Ennek hatására három felkelés tört ki: 1919-ben, 1920 augusztusában és 1921 májusában.

1934 szeptemberében felveszik a krakkói Képzőművészeti Akadémiára, Władysław Jarocki<sup>5</sup> festő osztályába. Az első három tanévet – saját vallomása szerint – „ellustult közömbösségben” élte le<sup>6</sup>. A két utolsó évben azonban Karol Frycz<sup>7</sup> növendékeként új világ tárul fel előtte. „Alig négyen voltunk tanítványok – írja. – Azt csinálhattunk, amihez éppen kedvünk volt, festhettünk vászonra, papírra, falra, tervezhattunk, vagy csinálhattunk maketteket. Karol Frycz időnként beesett hozzánk, és ilyenkor rendszerint egzotikus utazásairól, életéről mesélt. Gálans stílusa és hibátlan humorérzéke zsenialitást kölcsönzött neki. Ez idő tájt készítettem valamit a saját felelősségemre.”<sup>8</sup> Ő hívja fel a figyelmét Wyspiański sokirányú tevékenységére.

Még főiskolás, amikor sor kerül első színházi produkciójára. A Képzőművészeti Akadémia diákklubjában egyetlen alkalommal eljátsszák Maeterlinck *Tintagiles halála* című bábjátékát. A huszonhárom éves fiatalember darabválasztása a teljes életmű ismeretében megdöbbentő. A különös darabban – legalábbis csírájában – minden benne van, amit Kantor ki akar majd fejteni színházában. Még az is, ami a maga teljességében csak pályája utolsó szakaszára lesz jellemző. Benne van a drámaiság tagadása, a sors kifejezése, amely majd csak a halálban nyer végső értelmet. A halál, mint mozgatóerő, csontvázakra emlékeztető marionettfigurákban ölt testet. A nagyméretű figurák mozgatói láthatók. A bábu, a próbababa, a „manöken” a legfontosabb alkotóeleme lesz Kantor színházának, annak ellenére, hogy életművének egyetlen elemzője sem tekinti bábszínháznak azt, ami legfontosabb produkcióiban megjelenik. Hogy 1938-ban mégis a Nobel-díjas belga költő egyik bábjátékát állítja színpadra, azt egy következetesen eltökélt pálya első állomásának kell tekintenünk. Meglepő, ahogy kommentálja az eseményt: „... mit lehet kezdeni Maeterlinck kis drámácskáinak NAGY TITKÁIVAL, melyektől nem vált meg, avagy WYSPIAŃSKI úr varázsával, a WAWELLEL, a BRONOWICEI HÁZIKÓVAL, vagy Kafka padlásának egyre növekvő félmével? [...] A belső kétségek és konfliktusok pedig hamarosan szörnyűséges



Fryderyk Pautsch: *Karol Frycz*, pasztell, karton, 1902, magántulajdon (forrás: pinakoteka.zascianek.pl)

<sup>5</sup> Władysław Jarocki (1879–1965) festő, grafikus, 1921 és 1939 között a krakkói Képzőművészeti Akadémia tanára. A tájképfestészet iránti vonzalma mellett számos műve a hucul népszokásokat és pásztorfaragásokat örökíti meg.

<sup>6</sup> In: *Halálszínház*, 23. Bába Krisztina fordítása.

<sup>7</sup> Karol Frycz (1877–1963) dízlettervező, rendező, színiigazgató, a 20. századi lengyel színpadi képzőművészet kiemelkedő alakja. 1905-ben a Zöld Léggömbnél kezdte pályáját. Ő tervezte Wyspiański temetésekor a város feldíszítését. 1913-tól a Teatr Polski munkatársa. Hosszabb időt töltött Afrikában és a Távol-Keleten. 1935-től a krakkói Słowacki Színház igazgatója. Számos jelentős rendezés is fűződik a nevéhez.

<sup>8</sup> Uo. 23.

választ nyertek, ÁTALAKULTAK. Mert mindig így van ez, és így is kell lennie.”<sup>9</sup> Mint aki huszonhárom évesen előre megtervezte egész színházi életútját.

Az előadásból csak Kantor tervei maradtak fenn. Ötven évvel később egy római lapnak adott interjúban megismétli 1938-as írásának gondolatait első színházi kísérletéről: „Amikor 1937–38-ban színpadra állítottam a *Tintagiles halálát*, elkötelezett híve voltam az absztrakt művészetnek, Malevicsnek, Mondriannak, Kleenek, Gropius, Moholy-Nagy és Schlemmer tiszta formáinak. Konstruktivista lettem, de megpróbáltam elhelyezni magamban Maeterlinck kis drámáinak titkait, a kiátkozott szimbolizmust, Kafka nyugtalanságát. Azon töprengtem, mit keresek én a kripták között, ahol a lengyel királyok pihennek, vagy a szeméttel teli udvaron, ahol Bruno Schulz<sup>10</sup> költészete nyugszik.”<sup>11</sup>

A német megszállás alatt szobafestésből tartja fenn magát. 1939-ben záróvizsgát tesz Frycznél, majd Wielopole környékén bujkál. Itt szerez tudomást arról, hogy apját antifasiszta tevékenysége miatt Auschwitzba hurcolták. Hamarosan a halálhíre is eljut hozzá. Közben 1940-ben Krakkóban illegális művészcsoporthoz tartozva festő- és író-barátaival. A társaság néhány hónap után színházzá alakul. A Független Színház (Teatr Niezależny) próbái jórészt későbbi első felesége, Ewa Jurkiewicz<sup>12</sup> lakásán folynak. Ugyanitt kerül sor az első zártkörű előadásra, Jean Cocteau *Orfeusz* című drámájának bemutatójára 1942-ben.<sup>13</sup> Az egyfelvonásos tragédia is az életről és a halálról szól, mint a költő által később készített két filmváltozat<sup>14</sup> és mint a *Tintagiles halála*, meg Kantor valamennyi műve. A művész harca a démonokkal, az önimádattal és leküzdhetetlen vágya a halhatatlanságra – ezek már Cocteau 1927-ben megfogalmazott, folyton vissza-visszatérő gondolatai, amelyek a háború és a fenyegetettség idején különös aktualitással kelhettek életre a megszállt Krakkóban.

A következő évben Slowacki *Balladynáját* játsszák. A címszereplő nem jelenik meg a színen, egy guillotine-ra emlékeztető meghatározatlan plasztikai elem ábrázolja.

<sup>9</sup> Tadeusz Kantor: *Marionett Színház*. In: *Halálszínház*, 127. Kálmán Judit fordítása.

<sup>10</sup> Bruno Schulz (1892–1942) a lengyel próza abszurd vonulatának kiemelkedő képviselője. Mindössze kétkötetnyi elbeszélése maradt ránk, a *Fahajas boltok* (Sklepy cynamownowe, 1934) és a *Szanatórium a homokórához* (Sanatorium pod klepsydrą, 1937). Művei sok vonatkozásban Kafkára utalnak, akinek első lengyel fordítója volt. A német megszállás idején gettóba zárták, és egy gestapós a nyílt utcán agyonlőtte.

<sup>11</sup> *Országomat egy kis szeretetért*. Rita Salo interjúja az Il Messaggero di Roma 1987. június 19-i számában.

<sup>12</sup> Ewa Jurkiewicz (Krakowska, 1922–2011) festőművész. A német megszállás idején a Kunstgewerbeschulében kezdi festői tanulmányait, majd a háború után a krakkói Képzőművészeti Akadémián folytatja. A Teatr Niezależny és a Cricot 2 állandó közreműködője. 1945-ben Kantor felesége lesz. 1946-ban lányuk születik. 2009-ben forrásértékkönyve jelenik meg *Vázlatok emlékezetből* (Szkice z pamięci) címmel a háború alatti időkről és Kantor színházáról.

<sup>13</sup> Egyes források szerint Cocteau művének bemutatója később, 1944-ben volt.

<sup>14</sup> *Orfeusz* (Orphée, 1949), *Orfeusz végrendelete* (Le testament d’Orphée, 1960). Írta és rendezte: Jean Cocteau (1889–1963).

A hangja hangszórón át szól. A többi szereplő is hasonlóan merész transzformációs elvek szerint tűnik fel a radikálisan extravagáns előadásban. A lakásszínház szűkös lehetőségeiből most is erényt formál a rendező: elkerül minden színpadiasságot, hiszen nincs is színpad. Az események a nézők körül zajlanak. A ruhák, a tárgyak és a mozgások határozzák meg az előadás stílusát. Nem „szegény” színház abban az értelemben, ahogy majd Grotowski használja a fogalmat, inkább Białoszewski előhírnöke. Csak Kantornál nem a szó, a hangzók sora teremti meg a szürrealista valóságot, hanem a tárgyak különössége. Az *objet trouvé* és a *ready made* bizarr költészete. Kantor korai színházi munkáit legerőteljesebben Marcel Duchamp<sup>15</sup> ihlette.

A Független Színház harmadik és egyben utolsó premierje Wyspiański *Odüsszeusz visszatérése*<sup>16</sup> című drámájának szabad feldolgozása. Wyspiański persziflálja a trójai mondakör ismert epizódját. Nála Odüsszeusz a bolyongásaiba belefáradt gyilkos, aki hazatérése után Ithakában sem talál feloldozást bűneire. Az újabb gyilkosságok elől végül öngyilkosságba menekül. A fejtetőre állított történetet Kantor tovább aktualizálja: az antik hős a korszak katonájaként a nemrég véget ért háborúból tér haza. A nézőt hol Kantor Auschwitzban elpusztult apjára, hol Piłsudskira, hol pedig egy Wehrmacht-tisztre emlékeztetheti. „Kishitűség lenne Ulysszes<sup>17</sup> hatalmas tragédiáját kartonoszlopok és rongyokkal imitált tenger között eljátszani – írja Kantor a próbanaplójában. – A színészeket egyszerű csomagokon, létrákon és székeken szándékozom elhelyezni, a kellő pillanatokban megfosztva őket a jelmeztől, lemondva esztétikai értékekről. Be akarom vezetni a *véletlenszerűséget*, sőt a *rendetlenséget*, hogy a visszatérés maximálisan konkrét legyen. Ulysszes visszatér a *színpadra*, és ott teremti meg a maga számára Ithaka *illúzióját*.”<sup>18</sup>

A háború után először a krakkói Stary Teatr festőműhelyének vezetője lesz. Megismeri a „hivatásos” színház mindennapjait, és hamarosan sor kerül első tervezései-



Juliusz Słowacki: *Balladyna*, Független Színház (Teatr Niezależny), Krakó, 1943, r: Tadeusz Kantor, próbakép, balra a rendező (fotó: Witold Witaliński, forrás: encyklopediateatru.pl)

<sup>15</sup> Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) francia festő, a dada mozgalom egyik megteremtője. 1913-ban New Yorkban nagy feltűnést keltett *A lépcsőn lemenő akt* című képével, amely a kubista alapformákra egyszerűsített mozgó test különböző fázisait ábrázolja egy időben. Gyárilag készült használati tárgyaival, *objet trouvé*-ival és *ready made*-jeivel a művészethez fűződő hagyományos elképzeléseket gúnyolta ki.

<sup>16</sup> Powrót Odysa (1907)

<sup>17</sup> Kantor hol a görög Odüsszeusz, hol a latin Ulysses névváltozatot használja feljegyzéseiben.

<sup>18</sup> In: *Halálszínház*, 135. Király Nina és Heltai Gyöngyi fordítása.



Stanisław Wyspiański: *Odüsszeusz visszatérése*, Stary Teatr Stúdiója, 1945, tervező, rendező: Tadeusz Kantor (forrás: encyklopediateatru.pl)

re is Krakkó színházaiban (Czyżewski<sup>19</sup> *A faun*, Nałkowska<sup>20</sup>: *A hazatérés napja*, Karczewska<sup>21</sup>: *Éles tekintetek*, Wirski<sup>22</sup>: *A tábornok visszatérése*). A darabok többsége egyelőre rutinfeladat. Munka közben meg lehet tanulni, hogyan jönnek létre a hagyományos kőszínházi előadások, hogyan készülnek a díszletek az asztalos- és festőműhelyekben, hogyan valósul meg egy-egy jelmezterv az anyagbeszerzők, szabók, varrónők közreműködésével. A különösebb fantáziát nem igénylő helyszínnek és ruhák

után azonban hamar lehetősége lesz felhívni magára a figyelmet. Már 1945/46-ban ígéretes feladatok jelzik Kantor tervezői fejlődésének első állomását: Szaniawski *Két színház* című vígjátéka, amely egyike a háború utáni lengyel színház új fejezetét jelző műveknek, a valóságot szembesíti a tudatalatti szimbólumok világának költőiségével. Az első felvonás 1939 szeptembere előtt játszódik, amelyben egy hagyományos színház igazgatója hallani sem akar a modernista törekvésekről, a látomásos-metaforikus művészetről. A második felvonás a „színház a színházban” elvei alapján valójában két egyfelvonásos, a háború után játszódó harmadik felvonásban pedig az új igazgató a háború tragikus élményei hatására már elszakad a valóságot utánzó tradícióktól. Az ősbemutatót Irena Grywińska<sup>23</sup> rendezi, a díszleteket és jelmezeket Kantor tervezi.

Pályája szempontjából ezt az eseményt sem érdemes persze túlértékelni. Annyit azért megjegyezhetünk, hogy a hagyományos és a modern színház ellentmondásait okosan és biztos szakértelemmel fricskázgató komédia országos esemény a béke első évében, és számos tapasztalatot hoz az expresszionista deformáció lehetőségét bátran kiaknázó művész számára. Ugyanez mondható el a *Cid* felújításáról, amelyet a Stary új igazgatója, Jerzy Bujański<sup>24</sup> rendez. Kantor színpadképe és fennmaradt hat jelmezterve egyfajta hűvös távolságtartást fejez ki, ami tökéletesen megfelel a fordító-átdolgozó Wyspiański szellemének.

Fontosabb azonban, hogy a színház mellett működő stúdióban felújíthatja az *Odüsszeusz visszatérését*, a Rotundában pedig megrendezheti és megtervezheti Jó-

<sup>19</sup> Tytus Czyżewski (1885–1945) költő, festő, drámaíró. Rajztanárként kezdte pályáját, majd különböző irodalmi és képzőművészeti folyóiratok munkatársa.

<sup>20</sup> Zofia Nałkowska (1884–1954) költő, regény- és drámaíró. 1906-ban jelentkezett *Aszszonyok* (Kobiety) című regényével. A két háború között időszakban írja *A határ* (Granica) című művét. 1945 után több drámáját játszották.

<sup>21</sup> Wanda Karczewska (1913–1995) költő, novellista, műfordító, drámaíró, színházi kritikus.

<sup>22</sup> Juliusz Wirski (1893–1960) költő, drámaíró

<sup>23</sup> Irena Grywińska (1905–1969) színésznő, rendező, színházigazgató.

<sup>24</sup> Jerzy Ronald Bujański (1904–1986) színész, rendező, 1945 után a Stary Teatr első igazgatója. Doktori disszertációját Wyspiańskiról írta.

zef Czechowicz<sup>25</sup> *A méltatlan és a méltók*<sup>26</sup> című groteszk misztériumát az író emlékére készülő műsorban.

1946-ban a frissen kinevezett igazgató, Leon Schiller Łódźba hívja a Lengyel Hadsereg Színházához. Kapcsolatuk rövid életűnek bizonyul. Kantor, aki a harmincas években rajongó diákként nézte a kiváló rendező előadásait, a *Julius Caesart*, *A vihart*, az *Ősöket* és másokat, rádöbben, hogy kamaszkori eszményképe feladta hajdani modernista elveit. Craig, Wyspiański és az expresszionizmus egykori híve belesüppedt a naturalista színház elavult eszköztárába. Kenyértörésre mégsem kerül sor, és ez annak köszönhető, hogy Kantor féléves ösztöndíjat kap Párizsba. Így néhány hónap után végleg megszakad kapcsolata a lódzi színházzal és Schillerrel. A pályakezdő évekből Karol Frycz akadémiai működésén kívül csak Andrzej Pronaszko hatása marad meghatározó a számára.

Pronaszko az 1945/46-os szezonban a Stary Teatr művészeti vezetője és a stúdió irányítója. Kantor boldogan vállalja a továbbtanulást a kiváló és magas színvonalon működő szellemi műhelyben. Mestere befolyása még a későbbi években is nyilvánvaló a saját egyéniségét kereső Kantor tervezői munkáiban (Calderon: *A zalameai bíró*, 1951, Henri Becque<sup>27</sup>: *A hollók*, 1952, Lesage: *Turcaret*, Musset: *A szerelem nem játék*<sup>28</sup>, 1953).

A párizsi ösztöndíj különleges élményeket hoz. Először jár külföldön és mindjárt a művészetek fővárosában. Folyamatosan rajzol, fest, vázlatokat készít és jegyzetel. Az Odéon és a Boulevard Saint-Michel közelében lakik, falja az élményeket. Nemcsak a Louvre csodáit, de a Jeu de Paume impresszionistáit, a bal part galériáit, a jobb parton pedig Denise Renét<sup>29</sup>, a Maeght Galériát<sup>30</sup> és a többieket is folyamatosan látogatja. Aztán talál egy különlegességet, amelynek hatására kiadja a jelszót önmaga számára: beszüntetni a galériák látogatását! Felfedezi ugyanis a Palais des Découvertes-et, amelyről tirádákat zeng útinaplójában. Mi a Palais des Découvertes? „Hirtelen felhalmozása mindannak, amit a SZEM – ez az impresszionisták által annyira dicsőített emberi szerv, mely kivételes jogot követelt magának a festészetben, s általában a világ megismerésében – képtelen volt meglátni.”<sup>31</sup> Ebben a természettudományi múzeumban egy új világ tárul ki a szeme előtt, amely a továbbiakban döntő hatással lesz festészetére: a sejtek, gének, molekulák, szerkezetek infernója. Úgy érzi, mintha szemétkupacokat látna. A mikroszkópban

<sup>25</sup> Józef Czechowicz (1903–1939) költő, műfordító, az un. „második lengyel avantgárd” képviselője. Falusi tanító volt, de egészségi okokból abba kellett hagynia a tanítást. Ezután szerkesztőségekben dolgozott. Egy bombatámadás alkalmával vesztette életét Lublinban.

<sup>26</sup> Niegodzien i godni, 1933.

<sup>27</sup> Henry François Becque (1837–1899): *Les corbeaux* (1892)

<sup>28</sup> *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* (1834)

<sup>29</sup> Denise René (1913–2012) az op art és a kinetikus művészetekre szakosodott galériája

<sup>30</sup> Aimé Maeght (1906–1981) feleségével, Marguerite-tel alapított egyik galériája a Rue du Bac 42-ben.

<sup>31</sup> *Halálszínház*, 32. Király Nina és Heltai Gyöngyi fordítása.

rejtőzködő univerzumtól már csak egy lépés az egész festői és színházi világképét újrafogalmazó *emballage*-ig, az elrejtés, a becsomagolás korszakáig. „A csomagolás művelete a megőrzés, az izolálás, a túlélés, a továbbadás nagyon is emberi szükséglet és szenvedélyét, az ismeretlen titok ízét rejt magában – írja. – Ennek a mind bonyolultabb ceremóniának minden esélye megvan, hogy érdek nélküli, mi több, gyakran rögeszmés folyamattá váljék.

Ócska táskák, spárgával átkötözött csomagok, borítékok, szatyrok, hátizsákok – a tárgyak hierarchiájának e kezdettől fogva szemétdombra ítélt legmélyebb »bugyrai« megsemmisülésük küszöbén, utolsó felvillanásként kinyilvánítják autonóm tárgyi létüket. Ennek semmi köze a pop arthoz, amely számára a csomagolás csak iparosi megszállottság és bálványteremtés volt.”<sup>32</sup>



Tadeusz Kantor,  
Katowice, 1955 (forrás:  
dziennikzachodni.pl)

A párizsi élmények feldolgozásának nem kedvez az otthon egyre inkább megváltozó légkör, a szocialista realizmus fokozódó térhódítása. Barátaival 1948-ban még megszervezi a Modern Művészek krakkói kiállítását, amelyen metaforikus képeiből mutat be néhányat. Ugyanez év őszén kinevezik a krakkói Képzőművészeti Akadémia tanárává, de egy évvel később elbocsájtják. Ezután egészen 1955-ig nem állít ki, a nyilvánosság előtt csak színházi terveivel szerepel. Ezek közül figyelmet érdemel az opolei színház számára, Krystyna Skuszanka<sup>33</sup> rendezéséhez készített tervezői munkája Shakespeare *Szeget szeggeljéhez*, amely könnyedségével, puritán célszerűségével már Kantor saját arculatának kialakulását jelzi. Ez még olyan kényszer-feladatokra is elmondható, mint Trenyov *Ljubov Jarovajája*, amelyet a poznańi

színház meghívására készít; a legkevésbé sem követi az író naturalizmusba fulladó drámaiságát, inkább a történet monumentális erejét próbálja hangsúlyozni a játékterben (1954). Nazim Hikmet<sup>34</sup> *Legenda a szerelemről* című színműve Kantor tervezésében (1955) nem a keleti mesevilág közhelyeit ragadja meg, hanem a modern festészet játékos stilizálását kínálja a rendezőnek. Roman Brandstaetter<sup>35</sup> *Kopernikusza* a krakkói Teatr Poezjiben szintén puritán játékterével érdemel figyelmet. Többi kőszínházi terveit is a visszafogottság, a puritánság és a metafora ereje jel-

<sup>32</sup> *Halálszínház*, 60. Kálmán Judit fordítása.

<sup>33</sup> Krystyna Skuszanka (1924–2011) Leon Schiller tanítványa, az ötvenes évektől a lengyel színház kiemelkedő alakja. Előbb az opolei, majd a Nowa Huta-i Népszínház igazgatója férjével, Jerzy Krasowskival (1925–2008). Igazgatták a varsói (1963–64) és a wrocławai Teatr Polskit (1965–1972). 1990-ig a Nemzeti Színházat vezették.

<sup>34</sup> Nazim Hikmet (1901–1963). Az ötvenes években Kelet-Európa színházai előszeretettel tűzték műsorra a hazájában huszonöt évi börtönre ítélt és a Szovjetunióba emigrált szabadságharcos török író darabjait.

<sup>35</sup> Roman Brandstaetter (1908–1987) költő, drámaíró, Shakespeare-fordító. Többnyire történelmi és vallásos témájú darabokat írt.

lemzi (Szent Johanna, Hamlet, 1956, Anouilh: *Antigoné*, 1957). A sorból kiemelkedik Lorca *A csodálatos vargánéja*, amelynek nemcsak a díszlet- és jelmeztervezője, de a rendezője is. Wojciech Krakowski<sup>36</sup> ezt írja az előadásról: „A csupasz színpad csak nagyon jó rendezőknek és nagyon jó színészeknek való. [...] Megdöbbenő, hogy amikor a tervező egyben jó rendező is, és saját rendezéséhez tervez díszletet, mennyire képes takarékoskodni a játéktérrel.



Jean Anouilh: *Antigoné*, Stary Teatr, Krakkó, 1957, tervező: Tadeusz Kantor (forrás: cyfrowemuzeum.stary.pl)

Példaként hozhatjuk fel a stalinogródi<sup>37</sup> színház *A csodálatos vargánéját*. A rendező, Tadeusz Kantor mindössze néhány asztalt, széket és lépcsőt biztosított a színeszeinek. Ennyi elég volt a tervezőnek és a rendezőnek a színpadi tér ábrázolásához, a színészeknek pedig az atmoszféra megteremtéséhez.”<sup>38</sup>

„*A csodálatos vargáné* a költői metafora színháza volt – emlékezik egy másik szemtanú, Zenobiusz Strzelecki. – Három zsalugáter utalt Spanyolországra, a Varga pörölyének fantasztikus alakja meg a fehér kesztyűje pedig arról árulkodott, hogy itt szó sincs munkáról, amitől koszos lesz az ember keze. Itt a közönségesség és a fantázia csap össze egymással a költészet síkján. Lorcának is ez volt a szándéka.”<sup>39</sup>

Közben 1955-ben barátaival és családtagjaival létrehozta és kiteljesíti saját korszakos jelentőségű színházát, amelynek megalapozását még a német megszállás alatt kezdte el. Ez most már igazi színház. Egyenes folytatása a *Balladynának* és az *Odüsszeusz visszatérésének*, de még a *Tintagiles halálának* és az *Orfeusznak* is. Állandó helyiségük még mindig nincs, nem is játszanak rendszeresen, csak amikor elkészülnek egy-egy előadással. De van állandó társulatuk és van nevük. Persze hagyományos értelemben nem hivatásos színház. Akkoriban úgy mondták: fél-hivatásos. Ma inkább alternatívnak mondanánk, ha nem hangzana anakronisztikusan.

Úgy hívják, hogy Cricot 2. Az elnevezés a cirkusz szó anagrammája: azt jelenti: ez cirkusz. Lengyelül: to cirk. De utalás ez a harmincas évek azonos nevű avantgárd krakkói színházára is,<sup>40</sup> melynek tagjai közül többen részt vesznek a

<sup>36</sup> Wojciech Krakowski (1927–1991) díszlet- és jelmeztervező, szakíró.

<sup>37</sup> Katowice neve 1953 és 1956 között.

<sup>38</sup> Wojciech Krakowski: *O aktualnych problemach scenografii* (A díszlettervezés időszerei problémáiról). Teatr, 1956. 15–16. szám.

<sup>39</sup> Zenobiusz Strzelecki: *Polska plastyka teatralna* (A lengyel színpadi képzőművészet), III. 506.

<sup>40</sup> A Cricot 1933-tól 1938-ig működött Krakkóban, majd 1938–39-ben Varsóban. Vezetője Józef Jarema (1900–1974) festőművész volt. Az avantgárd vállalkozás műsorán szerepelt többek közt a *Pathelin mester*, Witkiewicz *Tintahal* és Wyspiański *Felszabadulás* című műve.

Cricot 2 előadásában. A társulat alapító tagjai között van Kazimierz Mikulski<sup>41</sup> és Maria Jarema<sup>42</sup>.

Két évtizeden át szinte kizárólag Witkiewicz műveit játsszák. Programadó bemutatójuk a *Tintahal*<sup>43</sup>, amely már a Cricot műsorán is szerepelt, és amely politikai cselekedetnek is tekinthető, hiszen ekkor, 1956-ban kerül a háború után először közönség elé a Tiszta Forma prófétájának műve. A *Tiszta Forma a színházban*<sup>44</sup> című



S. I. Witkiewicz: *Tintahal*, Cricot2, 1956, tervezte, rendezte: Tadeusz Kantor, a *Świat* folyóirat címlapja (forrás: mariaciesielska.blogspot.be)

esszéjében az író olyan színházat követel, amelyet nem szennyez be semmiféle tartalom. Ha ezt nem is sikerül tökéletesen megvalósítania darabjaiban, azért Artaud-val és Alfred Jarryval rokon elméletét érvényesíteni tudja. Kantor darabválasztásában nyilván az is közrejátszott, hogy olyan előadással kívánt bemutatkozni, amely Józef Jarema műsorán is szerepelt. De azért is lehetett legalább ennyire fontos a számára ez az egyfelvonásos, mert valamiféle kiindulópontja Witkiewicz világlátásának. Sikertelen művészek, boldogtalan asszonyok vegetálnak itt, hogy aztán alig megváltozott alakban későbbi műveiben visszatérjenek. A rendező korántsem pepecsel a szerző által megírt helyzetekkel, inkább „a drámával párhuzamos akciókat” hoz létre; többek között megjelenik az első „emballage” is egy gégbe bepólyált színész múmiaszerű alakjában.

A következő bemutató Mikulski *Stúdió* című pantomimje és *Cirkusz* című szürrealista etűdsorozata 1957-ben. Ezután négy év szünet következik, majd elkezdődik a Cricot 2 második korszaka, az „informel színház”, amelynek első stációja Witkiewicz *Egy kis udvarházban*<sup>45</sup> című színművének premierje (1961). Az informel színház az informel festészet<sup>46</sup> elveire épül. Ő maga így jellemzi az előadás középpontjában álló

<sup>41</sup> Kazimierz Mikulski (1918–1998) festő, grafikus, tervező, a lengyel szürrealista festészet meghatározó alakja. 1948-tól 1979-ig a krakkói Grotteska Báb- és Maszkszínház képzőművészeti vezetője. (A színház alapító igazgatója a harmadik Jarema, Władysław /1896-1971/, az első Cricot társulatának oszlopos tagja.) Kantor közeli barátja, már a megszállás alatt készült előadásában is közreműködött. Mikulskinak köszönhetem, hogy a hetvenes évek közepén személyesen megismerhettem Kantort és jelen lehettem néhány próbáján.

<sup>42</sup> Maria Jarema (1908–1958) szobrász, festő, tervező, Józef és Władysław Jarema húga, a 20. századi lengyel képzőművészet kiemelkedő alakja. Színészi munkáján kívül tervezőként is részt vett a Cricot és a Cricot 2 előadásainak létrehozásában.

<sup>43</sup> *Małwa*, 1922

<sup>44</sup> *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, 1923

<sup>45</sup> *W małym dworku*, 1922–1925

<sup>46</sup> A 2. világháború után kialakult mozgalom, az amerikai action painting francia megfelelője, amely szakít a művészi alkotás formateremtő elvével, a be nem fejezett, nyitott mű elméletét hirdeti, formává nem alakult anyagot, faktúrát mutat be, kizárva a műből minden preconcepciót és jelentést.

képsort: „Összepréselt színészek / a szekrény szűk, abszurd terében, / összevegyítve, összekeverve a holt tárgyakkal, / (zsákok, tömördek zsák) / megnyomorított egyéniséggel és méltósággal tehetetlenül lógnak / mint ruhák a foga-son, azonosulnak a súlyos zsákokkal.”<sup>47</sup>

Az *őrült és az apáca*<sup>48</sup> előadása (1963) a harmadik állomás, a „zéró-színház” első gyakorlati megfogalmazása. A darabban zajló események valamennyi összefüggését nullára redukálta. Ezzel azt kívánta bizonyítani, hogy a művészet nem „fel fel”, a plusz tartomány irányába tart. Kantor minimálisra csökkentette a szereplők mozgását és érzelmeinek kinyilvánítását. A játékteret egy abszurd megsemmisítő szerkezet (egymásra halmozott összecsukható székek csoportja) egyre jobban összezugszorította. A színészek megpróbálták ellenállni a felsőbb hatalomnak, de végül a gépezet legyőzte őket. „A (teljességgel) autonóm művészi tevékenység (a színházra gondolok) nem az élet szabályai és normái alapján jön létre, és már csak ez okból sem magyarázható az élet kategóriáival, azok pozitív vagy negatív értékítéleteivel” – írja a zéró-színházról. – A »növekedés« eszméje, amely a kezdeteknél az ember tragikus *expanziója*, az emberi dimenziók és az emberi sors *túllépésének* heroikus igyekezete volt, az idő múlásával amolyan bemutatónak vált. [...] Az *ellenkező* irányba: »lefelé«, a normál életmód / »alatti« területek felé való irányulás – [...] ez az *ILLÚZIÓ SZÉTHULLÁSÁNAK* folyamata, és az egyetlen lehetőség arra, hogy a *VALÓSÁGGAL* érintkezzünk.”<sup>49</sup>

A *Vízityúk*<sup>50</sup> előadását (1967) Kantor negyedik korszaknak, a „történések színházának” nevezi, amely az akkor divatba jött happening megfelelője. Ócskapiacra összeszedett kacatokból készült „kínzógép” áll a tér közepén. A színészek egy része az „örök vándor” kellékeit cipeli, a nézők közt elvegyülve jönnek-mennek, egy igazi pincér igazi kávékat szolgál fel. Itt jelennek meg először a szereplők báb-hasonmásai, a manökenek, amelyek a későbbi produkciókban egyre fontosabb szerepet töltenek be. Ezeket Kantor a „legalacsonyabb rendű realitás” megtestesítésének, később „a halál üzenetének” és a színész modelljének nevezi.

A *Százszorszépek és piperköcök*<sup>51</sup> (1973) a Cricot 2 ötödik korszaka, a „lehetetlen színház”, amely egy kabátokkal, keménykalapokkal, rohamsisakokkal és zsá-



E emberek vállán. Tadeusz Kantor tanulmányrajza a „Kis udvarházban” című előadáshoz, papír, tus, akvarell, 1961, Nemzeti Múzeum, Wrocław (fotó: A. Podstawka, forrás: wydarzenia.o.pl)

<sup>47</sup> *Halálszínház*, 142.

<sup>48</sup> *Wariat i zakonnica*, 1923

<sup>49</sup> *Halálszínház*, 146. Fejér Irén fordítása.

<sup>50</sup> *Kurka wodna*, 1921

<sup>51</sup> *Nadobnisie i koczodany*, 1922.



Tadeusz Kantor: Százsorszepek és piperkőcök a ruhatárban, filctoll, akril, papír, 1972, Kortárs Képzőművészeti Múzeum, Radom (fotó: Marek Gardulski, forrás: szufi.pl)

kokba bújtatott köpenyekkel zsúfolt ruhatárban játszódnak.

1975-ben mutatják be Kantor életművének legtöbbet emlegetett, leg-sikeresebb és talán legjelentősebb re-mekművét, a *Halott osztályt*. Ezzel kezdetét veszi a színház utolsó, hatodik korszaka, amelynek öt darabja a művész önéletrajza és önvallomása. De addig még létrejön néhány olyan elő-adás is, amely nem a Cricot 2 program-jához kapcsolódik. Ilyen 1966-ban az *Egy kis udvarházban* második változata, amelyet Baden-Badenben rendez meg *A szekrény* címmel. 1968-ban *Találkozás az orrszarúval* címmel happeninget mutat be a nürnbergi Kunsthallében.

1968-ban Krakkóban kerül sor egy má-sik happeningre az akkor tíz éve elhunyt Maria Jarema emlékére. 1972-ben egy franc-ia együttessel, a Théâtre 71-gyel megrendezi Witkiewicz *Suszterek*<sup>52</sup> című darabját.

Közben kiállít Stockholmban (1958), a párizsi Legendre Galériában, a düssel-dorfi Kunsthallében, részt vesz *A huszadik század művészete* című kiállításon Char-leroix-ban és a kasseli *Documenta 2* világkiállításon (1959). Kiállítása nyílik New Yorkban, Göteborgban. Részt vesz a XXX. *Velencei Biennálén* (1960), kiállít Krak-kóban (1963), Zürichben, Lausanne-ban, Bochumban (1964). Szerepel a New York-i D'Arcy Galéria lengyel festészeti seregszemléjén és a baden-badeni Kunst-halle *L'Art et Théâtre* című kiállításán. Happeninget készít Krakkóban *Válasz-tóvonal*<sup>53</sup> címmel (1965), *Emballages* címen kiállítása nyílik Párizsban, Baselben (1966), részt vesz a Sao Paoló-i nemzetközi biennálén (1967), a nürnbergi *Prinzip-Collage* című kiállításon és szimpóziumon (1968), kiállít a varsói Foksal Galériá-ban. Részt vesz a *Galeries Pilotes* lausanne-i és párizsi nemzetközi kiállításán és a *Happening und Fluxus* kölni világkiállításán. Kiállít a krakkói Krzysztofory Galériá-ban (1970) és a varsói Foksal Galériában (1971). Ugyanitt újabb kiállítása van *Minden egy hajszálon függ* címmel (1973). Krakkóban és Varsóban bemutatják *Em-ber-rezervátum* című kiállítását. Łódźban, majd Stockholmban nagy retrospektív kiállításra kerül sor *Emballage-ok* címmel (1975). Oslóban és Londonban (1976), majd Amsterdamban, Nürnbergben, Erlagenben, Nancyban, az iráni Shirazban, Belgrádban, részt vesz a kasseli *Documenta 6* világkiállításon, a dublini Ross nem-zetközi seregszemlén (1977), a mannheimi *Lengyel művészet* kiállításon, és kiállít a római Palazzo dell'Esposizione-ban (1978).

<sup>52</sup> Szewcy, 1931–34.

<sup>53</sup> *Linia podziatu*

1969-ben van a Cricot 2 első külföldi turnéja. Rómában, Modenában, Bolognában játsszák a *Vízityúk*ot. 1971-ben részt vesznek a nancy-i Világszínházi Fesztiválon. 1972-ben meghívást kapnak az edinburghi Művészeti Fesztiválra. 1974-ben Párizsba, Rómába, Nancyba, Shirazba, majd Essenbe utaznak. 1976-ban Edinburghban, Cardiffban és Londonban, 1977-ben Amszterdamban, Nürnbergben, Erlangenben, Nancyban, Shirazban, a belgrádi BITEF-en, 1978-ban Firenzében, Milánóban, majd az ausztráliai Adelaide-ben és Sydneyben, később Zürichben és Genovában, Caracasban, Berlinben, Stuttgartban, Mexikó több városában, Milánóban és Stockholmban játsszák *A halott osztály*t.

Az ötvenes évek végétől új tagokkal egészül ki a társulat: Maria Stangrettel<sup>54</sup>, Zbigniew Gostomskival<sup>55</sup>, Roman Siwulakkal<sup>56</sup>, a Janicki ikerpárral<sup>57</sup> és másokkal.

A „Halálszínház”-nak nevezett utolsó alkotói korszak nem abban különbözik az előzőektől, hogy a halál van az előadások középpontjában, hiszen ez a korábbi művekre épp úgy jellemző. Az 1975-ben kezdődő szakasznak nem csupán formai jellemzője, hogy ettől kezdve Kantor személyesen is részt vesz minden produkcióban. Fekete öltönyben, fehér ingben, sállal a nyakában irányítja a játékot. Egy gesztussal, egy pillantással. Sok rendező titkos vágya, hogy karmesterként vezényelhesse az általa létrehozott játékot. Hogy ne kelljen elszakadni újszülött gyermekétől. Az általános színházi gyakorlat a premier után csak megbeszéléseket, legjobb esetben javítópróbákat tesz lehetővé, hogy a rendező tovább alakíthassa a „kész” produkciót. Kantor megvalósította ezt a vágyát. Megtehetette, mert színháza öntörvényű és sok másban is különbözik minden egyéb teátrális formációtól. De hogy ez nem pusztán különcködés, vagy formai ötlet, az akkor igazolódik be, ha egyik-másik előadását többször megnézzük. Azt látjuk, hogy az egyszeri, a megismételhetetlen a Cricot 2 egyik legizgalmasabb csodája: minden előadás más, ahogy valójában persze soha egyetlen színházban sem láthatjuk kétszer ugyanazt. Az *itt és most* felerősített varázsa lengi be Kantor utolsó öt színházi alkotását.

*A halott osztály* Witkiewicz *Agydaganatovics*ának hatására jött létre, de a rendező ezúttal a korábbi feldolgozásoknál is szabadabban kezeli kedvenc szerzőjének anyagát. „Kantor hűtlen lett Witkiewiczhez – jelenti ki Tadeusz Kudliński. – Darabjainak problematikáját és poétikáját a saját vízióira cserélte. Witkie-

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<sup>54</sup> Maria Stangret (1929) festő, író, Kantor második felesége. 1955-től a krakkói Képzőművészeti Akadémia növendéke. 1956-tól a Grupa Krakowska tagja. 1957-től vesz részt a Cricot 2 előadásiban. 1961-ben házasságot köt Kantorral, ettől kezdve Stangret-Kantor néven működik. 1962-től rendszeresen jelentkezik írásaival is. 1994-ben alapítványt hoz létre férje emlékére. A *Tintahal* kivételével a színház valamennyi előadásában játszott.

<sup>55</sup> Zbigniew Gostomski (1932) festő, grafikus, 1966-tól a Cricot 2 színésze.

<sup>56</sup> Roman Siwulak (1952) festő, grafikus, 1970-től a Cricot 2 tagja.

<sup>57</sup> Lesław és Waław Janicki (1944) színészek, többnyire filmszerepekben játszottak, komikus párosokat alakítottak. Először a *Választóvonal* című happeningben vettek részt, majd rendszeresen felléptek a Cricot 2 számos előadásán.

wicz abszurditását az n-edik hatványra emelte, amely ezzel új méreteket öltött. A józan észről elszakadva, következményeivel és saját logikájával eljutott a csúcsra”.<sup>58</sup>

A *halott osztály*ban Kantor egykori osztálytársai együtt ülnek Witkacy hőseivel a kopott, régimódi iskolapadokban. Sötét öltönyös vénemberek a sír szélén, vagy talán már „odaátról”. Egy takarítónő lép be, nőnek öltözött férfi, a kezében söprű és kasza. A halál angyala. Egy régi újságból cikket olvas fel az osztrák trónörökös meggyilkolásáról. Egy diák, a legvéznább, akit annak idején biztos folyton szekáltak a többiek, a háborúban elesettek gyászjelentéseit mutogatja. Aztán kivonulnak, az osztályterem elnéptelenedik. Amikor visszajönnek, a hátukon gyerekkori énjükre emlékeztető bábokat cipelnek. Ők az a bizonyos legalacsonyabb rendű valóság, amely el nem múló emlékként itt van velük halálukig. Egy pederszta az osztrák himnuszt énekl. A Takarítónő-halál később bordélyház-tulajdonossá avanszál, a Pedellus is egyike a legalacsonyabb rendű alakoknak, benne van a múlt egész melankóliája.

Az ablak rendkívüli tárgy, amely elválasztja az élőket az ismeretlen világtól, a haláltól. Ott áll mögötte valaki, egy nőalak, egy fúria, aki folyton közölni akar valamit. A vécés bácsi, ahogy régen, most is magányosan trónol az iskolai vizeldében. Széttett lábakkal, ordenáré módon ücsörög, és vitázik Istenével. A biciklis bácsi képtelen megválni gyerekkora szánalmas, vacak játékától. Elindul világgá, de a világ már csak egy tanterem. És már nem is ő ül a biciklin, hanem egy keresztre feszített, halott kisgyerek. Egy titokzatos, holdkóros prostituált bolyong a padok közt, viszszatasztó mozdulatokkal mutogatja a bájait. A bukott sánta diák gyászjelentéseket kézbesít, álmában a padhoz van kötözve és a nyelvtan leckét memorizálja. Egy nő mechanikus bölcsőt tologat; a bölcső olyan, mint egy koporsó, két fagolyó zörögcsattog benne. Különös, bódult álomban lebeg az egész furcsa panoptikum. Már nem tudjuk, a bábuk élnek-e és az emberek a halottak, vagy fordítva. Ebben a haláltáncban minden magyarázat lehetséges és minden magyarázat fölösleges.

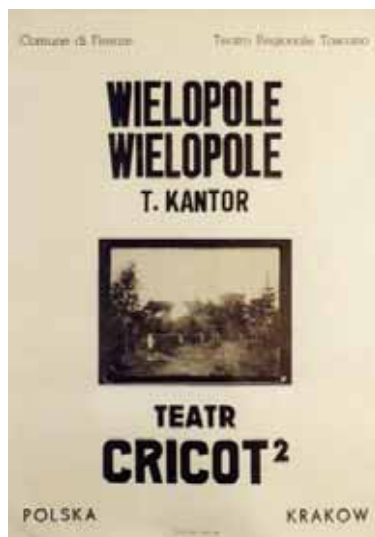


A *halott osztály*, 1975, Krzysztofory Galéria  
(fotó: Maciej Sochor, forrás: archiwum.wiz.pl)

A bemutatóra a krakkói Krzysztofory Galériában kerül sor. (Ez az utolsó produkció, amelynek a világpremierje Lengyelországban van.) Utána angliai turnéra indulnak, majd fellépnek vele Amszterdamban, Nürnbergben, Erlangenben, a nancy-i Világszínház Fesztiválon, a shirazi Művészeti Világfesztiválon, a belgrádi BITEF-en a fesztivál nagydíjával tüntetik ki. Több világkörüli turnén vesznek részt az amerikai földrészen és Ausztráliában. Európa számos nagyvárosában vendégszerepelnek.

<sup>58</sup> Tadeusz Kudliński: *Vademecum teatromana* (Egy mániákus színházi kalauza), 305.

A *Wielopole, Wielopole* bemutatója Firenzében volt 1980-ban, néhány hónappal a *Hol van a tavalyi hó*<sup>59</sup> című happening római premierje után. A város meghívására itt tartották a próbákat is. Ez még szomorúbb, még megrendítőbb és még groteszkebb előadás, mint az előző. Ezek már nem csupán egyetlen ember emlékei; egy nemzet szenvedéstörténetének szaggatott víziói peregnek le a szemünk előtt. Az apa először fényképként, később völegényként, frontkatonaként, majd hősi halottként jelenik meg. Itt is minden a visszajárra fordul, mint *A halott osztályban*, csak most az igazi *Wielopole* egykori felhőtlen keresztény–zsidó szimbiózisa válik hátborzongatóvá. Az esküvőn halott a menyasszony, s a szertartást nem a plébános, hanem egy pincér végzi, „iközben a pap tánra perdül. A rabbi vezényli a náci pribékeket. Miközben a zenekar némán játszik, felhangzik egy zsidó bölcsődal, amit a gázkamrába induló foglyok énekeltek Auschwitzban. A mezítlábas Mosonő szenvedélyes operaáriaként folytatja, közben csatlakozik a halálmenethez, és átváltozik angyallá. A színpadi forgatagban katonák ugrálnak fel a vonatra. Egy fényképész hatalmas, kerek állványon gördülő, harmonikás fotómáshinával idilli csoportképet készít róluk. Daguerre szerkentyűje hirtelen gépfegyverré alakul át, és sortüzet zúdít rájuk. A menyasszony báb-hasonmásával katonák labdáznak. A zárójelenetben frakkos urak a Rákóczi-induló dallamára gyászfátylat borítanak a társulatra. Ebben a nevetségesen ünnepélyes szertartásban a nyolcvanas évek firenzei, római, párizsi, londoni, madridi, New York-i, varsói, gdański és krakkói nézője egyszerre érzékelt a negyven évvel korábbi fasiszta megszállás légkörét és az ötvenes évek kegyetlen koncepciós pereinek atmoszféráját, a kommunista diktatúra látszat-humánusát és minden sötét szándékot leplezni akaró hazugságait.



A *Wielopole, Wielopole* olaszországi ősbemutatójának plakátja (forrás: sklep.cricoteka.pl)



A „fotó-géppuska” az előadásban (fotó: R. Martinis, forrás: culturaitalia.it)

<sup>59</sup> *Où sont les Neiges d'Antan?* A lengyel változatot (*Gdzie są niegdyśsże śniegi?*) 1984 májusában mutatták be a varsói Klub Studenckiban.

Közben újabb turnék várnak rájuk. Szeptemberben a párizsi Pompidou Központban, majd Barcelonában, Madridban, Genfben, Caglariban, Los Angelesben, Görögországban és Izraelben játsszák *A halott osztályt* és a *Wielopole, Wielopolét*.

*A Vesszenek a művészek!* címe Kantor elmondása szerint úgy keletkezett, hogy Párizsban egy galériatulajdonos hiába kérte a szomszédok engedélyét az üzlete megnyitásához. Amikor azzal próbálta megnyerni őket, hogy itt híres művészek fognak kiállítani, az egyik dühös lakó felkiáltott: „Vesszenek a művészek!” Ebből született a cím, majd az ötlet, hogy a krakkói Mária-templom főoltárának alkotója, Wit Stwosz<sup>60</sup> is jelenjen meg az előadásban. Az ő történetében egy szög szerepel, amellyel a nürnbergiek büntetésül átszúrták az okirat-hamisítással vádolt öreg mester arcát. A történet bizarrságát fokozza, hogy a Cricot 2 előadását egy nürnbergi mecénás is támogatta.

Az előadás közepe táján tehát Wit Stwosz is feltűnik. „De egyáltalán nem áll szándékunkban elmesélni élete történetét – mondja egyik kommentárjában Kantor. – Vegyük úgy, hogy Wit Stwosz »megtaláltatott«, mint egy »personnage trouvé«. / A talált szónak itt mélyebb értelme van, mint első pillantásra tűnik. / A »talált« tárgy a népi hiedelmekben s az ősi kultúrákban a HALOTTAK világával, a »másik oldallal« érintkezik. / Megmagyarázhatatlan, céltalan, érdeknélküli, / szinte tiszta MŰALKOTÁS! / Esetünkben Wit Stwosz személye nem volt előre betervezve, múltból való előhívása egyáltalán nem függ össze élete vagy életművének nagysága iránti különösebb érdeklődésünkkel. / *Magától jelenik meg. Senki se hívta.* / Mondhatni: Wit Stwosz a TŰLVILÁGRÓL jön.”<sup>61</sup>

Kantor ezúttal nemcsak rendező-karmestere az előadásnak, de alteregója katonaköpenyes kamaszként is feltűnik a ló-csontvázon „belovagoló” Piłsudski kíséretében, az előadás végén pedig mint haldokló aggastyán ágyban fekszik.

Fontos szerepe van a játékban a tükrözésnek, a megfordítottságnak, amely Kantor magyarázata szerint a költészet titkos törvényeit képes feltárni. Ezt fejezik ki a Janicki-testvérek, akik közül az egyik mindig elszenved, a másik pedig a kívülálló szemszögéből kommentálja az eseményeket. A két színész bohóctréfákat ad elő, a cirkusz halálosan komoly és rettentően mulatságos világot csempészve bele a fájdalmas szituációkba. A halál ezúttal fekete fehér-



*Vesszenek a művészek!* 1985, a Piłsudski bevonulása jelenet (forrás: culturehub.co)

<sup>60</sup> Veit Stoss (lengyelesen Wit Stwosz, 1438 vagy 1445–1533) német szobrász, festő, rézmetsző. 1477-ben Krakkóba költözött, ahol a Mária-templom főoltárának elkészítésére kapott megbízást. A kelet-közép-európai késő gótikus szobrászat kiemelkedő mestere. Krakkóban több más remekműve is megtalálható. 1496-tól Nürnbergben élt. 1503-ban okirat-hamisítási ügybe keveredett, amiért el kellett menekülnie a városból.

<sup>61</sup> *Halálszínház*, 204. Király Nina és Heltai Gyöngyi fordítása.

neműt viselő, csábító szépasszony, aki fekete zászlót lenget a forradalom és az anarchia diadalmas vezéréként. Az „emlékezet kliséiként” pedig kínzó-szerszámok, sírkeresztek, „bio-objektumokká” egyesülő félelmetes masinák veszik körül a szereplőket.

Az előadást 1985-ben Nürnbergben mutatták be, majd Milánóban, az Avignoni Fesztiválon, a párizsi Őszi Fesztiválon és New Yorkban játszották. Csak a következő évben került sor a varsói és a krakkói premierre.

A másik darab eredeti lengyel címe, az *Ide se jövök többé*<sup>62</sup> is a véletlen műve. Valamilyik krakkói hivatalnok megsértette Kantort, mire ő dühösen kifakadt: „Ide se jövök többé!” Egy újságíró nő meghallotta, és ezt mondta rá: milyen jó darabcím lenne! A hely, ahova többé nem jön Kantor, az imádott Krakkó lett volna. Nem tartotta be dühös fogadkozását, de darabcímnek jó lett. És már nem csupán Krakkóra vonatkozott, de önmagára, a saját helyzetére, és mindarra, amiről az előadás szól.

Kantor monológjával kezdődik. Előadásainak megszokott, állandó bútorai – egymásra rakott ócska asztalok, hokedlik, sámlik – között ül a félhomályban, és hangszórókon át halljuk a gondolatait: „Mindjárt belépek / a lepukkant és gyanús / kocsmába. / Sokat ültem itt / éjszakákon át. / Álmatlanul. / Eljöttem a találkozóra, nem tudom, emberekkel, vagy nézőimmal...”<sup>63</sup> Aztán azon morfondíroz, hogy az emberből néha démoni erők törnek fel. Ilyenkor érkezik el a nagy művek megalkotásának pillanata.

A színészek szétrakják az egymásra pakolt asztalokat, és elkezdődik a történet, amibe az alkotó (Kantor, a Demiurgosz) mintha véletlenül csöppenne bele. Egy fekete láda van nála (hegedűtok? gyerekkoporsó?), és szembetalálkozik a korábbi előadások szereplőivel. A társulat tagjai ujjonganak, szitkozódnak, különféle indulatok törnek ki belőlük: „Jaj, itt van! Megjött végre! Nahát!” Hangszóróból halljuk Kantor (régebbi?) instrukcióit, majd részleteket olvas fel az *Odüsszeusz visszatéréséből*.



*Soha nem térek ide vissza*, 1988, jelenetkép az előadásból (forrás: e.teatr.pl)



Az esküvői jelenet az előadásból, Kantor mannekinjével, Varsó, 1990 (fotó: Aleksander Jałosiński, forrás: news.cricoteca.pl)

<sup>62</sup> *Nigdy już tu nie powrócę*, 1988

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjjFEPiPhDA>

Emlék-mozaikokból áll össze az utolsó előadás, a Kantor 75. születésnapjára készített *Ma van a születésnapom*<sup>64</sup> is. Minden eddiginél szomorúbb és megrendítőbb visszaemlékezés ez a régi meg az új háború borzalmaira, a „boldog” békeidőkre, az 1917-es orosz forradalomra, a fasiszta megszállásra, a zsidóüldözésre. A játék a Képzület Szegény Szobájában kezdődik. Az ágyon a Szerző árnyéka alszik, a földön emberi emballage-ok hevernek. Üres képkeretek között, az egyikben a Szerző önarcképe, a másikban Velasquez *Infánsnője* látható. Most is minden megszólalás hol pátosszal teli, hol cirkuszian harsány. Az ajtón bejönnek a halottak, köztük a Szegény lány, mint egy nagyon régi emlék. Őt követi az Apa, az Anya, a Muzsikus bácsi és Smietana, a wielopolei pap. A Szolgálólány hosszú deszkát hoz, ebből lesz az asztal. Életre kel a régi családi fénykép, valaki tósztot mond, majd a Pap prédikál. Az Újságárustól megtudjuk, milyen évet írunk. A *halott osztályból* ismert Pedellus ágyút hoz. Felcsendül a *Gott erhalte*. Fényképezés, általános boldogság.



*Ma van a születésnapom*, 1991, a Mejerhold kínzatása jelenet a befejezetlen, rekonstruált eladásból (fotó: François Canard, forrás: encyklopediateatru.pl)

A folytatásban halott ember-emballage-ok hevernek a csatatéren. Egy árnyék meg a Szolgálólány frontkórházi ápolóvá alakul át. A Szerző részleteket olvas fel Emballage-kiáltványából. Megjelenik Klein-Jehova doktornő. Ellenőrzi, vannak-e még harcképes emberek a rongyos áldozatok között. Aztán a wielopolei Vízhordóval táncot lejt egy zsidó dallamra. Az emballage-ok cirkuszi körmenete vezet be az új teremtés pillanatait. Az élet legyőzi a halált.

A Képzület Szegény Szobájában váratlanul megjelenik Maria Jarema mint az absztrakt művészet forradalmi biztosja. Jelszavakat kiabál az avantgárd mozgalom manifesztumából. Kantor felolvassa hozzá írt levelét: „Írok neked / az utolsó oldalakon. / Tiszteletbeli hely. / Mert meg van fordítva minden. [...] Nyugodtak lehetünk! / Büszke vagyok és meghatódott, hogy VELED / tettem egy jókora utat...”<sup>65</sup>

Jarema titokzatos poggyászából előjön a félmeztelen Jonasz Stern<sup>66</sup>. Jaremával együtt bebújnak a bőröndbe.

Velasquez *Infánsnője* újból meglátogatja a Szerzőt. A család a Szegény lánnyal együtt asztalhoz ül. A többiek részleteket kiabálnak korábbi szerepeikből. Betó-

<sup>64</sup> *Dziś są moje urodziny*

<sup>65</sup> *Halálszínház*, 244. Király Nina fordítása

<sup>66</sup> Jonasz Stern (1904–1988) festő, grafikus, díszlet- és jelmeztervező, a Cricot munkatársa, a Grupa Krakowska alapítója. A náci megszállók kivégzése előtt egy hullahegy alatt bújt meg, majd Budapestre szökött, ahol a háború végéig magyar ismerősei bújtatták. 1945-ben visszatért Lengyelországba.

dul a csőcselék, majd a Hatalom Szervei, tankok, ágyúk, géppisztolyok, rendőrök, párttitkárok, gyilkosok erőszakot követnek el a szoba lakóin.

Az Árnýék és a Szolgálólány rendet csinál. Egy sarokban három NKVD-s lapul. Maria Jarema és Jonasz Stern bekíséri az áldozatot. A hangszóróból Mejerhold levelének szövegét halljuk oroszul, amelyet a kivégzése előtti napon írt Molotovnak, a Szovjetunió Legfelső Tanácsa elnökének: „Engem itt véresre vertek, engem, a hatvanhat éves, idős embert, hasra fektettek a padlóra, gumibottal ütötték a talpamat meg a hátamat, aztán fölültettek egy székre, és a lábamat, a térdemet püfölték eszeveszetten. Pár nap után, mikor az ütések helye földagadt, a véraláfutásos sebeket verték gumibottal... [...] Amikor a priccse fektettek, és elaludtam, azt hittem, egy óra múlva folytatják a tizennyolc órája tartó kínvallatást. Felébredtem a saját jajgatásomra meg arra, hogy rángatózom a fekhelyemen, mint egy láztól felhevült haldokló...”<sup>67</sup>

A Szegény Vásári Bódé színészei jönnek elő; a *Katyusa* vidám melódiájára győzelmi táncot járnak. A Cricot 2 társulata tiszteleg a meggyilkolt Mejerhold emléke előtt.

Az Árnýék és a Szolgálólány rendet csinál. Sírások jönnek sírkeresztekkel. Egy vadállat ketrece gördül be. Egy ember van benne. A háború és a terror rémségei, a vérengző diktátorok árnyai cirkuszi kellékekkel keverednek.

A szomorú valóság átírta az eredeti forgatókönyvet. Szemtanúk állítják, hogy rohanásban, néha eszelős tempóban zajlottak a próbák. Kantor sietett. Nem pepecselt az apró részletek kidolgozásával, mint azelőtt. De az 1991 januárjában megtartott bemutatót nem érthette meg. 1990. december 8-án meghalt. A párizsi premieren üres volt a rendező-mágus-karmester széke. Amikor hangfelvételtől bejátszották az instrukcióit, az egyik fiatal színész átvette a szerepét.

A legenda szerint a premier egyik nézője az előadás végén virágot tett az üresen maradt székre.

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<sup>67</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-9j7naG\\_11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-9j7naG_11)

## **Géza Balogh: Avantgarde Theatre in Eastern Europe**

### Tadeusz Kantor and Cricot 2

In his introduction the author uses the following words to appreciate Tadeusz Kantor's oeuvre: "He represents a summary of what Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński, Wyspiański and Leon Schiller dreamed of and created, and he was the first one among Poles to enter international public consciousness as a full citizen of the world theatre." The essay follows a chronological order of those stations in Kantor's biography which had a decisive influence on his artistic development. A concise summary is provided of the six periods of his directing career, which began by the foundation of Cricot 2 ("avantgarde theatre": 1955; "informal theatre": 1961; "zero theatre": 1963; "happening theatre": 1967; "impossible theatre": 1972; "theatre of death": 1975). There is a suggestive description in the study of the most significant works which lifted Tadeusz Kantor among one of the most outstanding stage directors and linguistically innovative theatre-makers in the 20th century (*The Dead Class*, 1975; *Wielopole, Wielopole*, 1980; *Today Is My Birthday*, 1990).



VÉGH ATTILA



## Arc a maszk alatt

A kultúrtörténet az álarcnak három fő típusát ismeri: a színházi, a rituális és a halotti maszkot. A maszk eltünteti az arcvonásokat, elrejt mindent, ami egyedi, és az ember szavait, tetteit a túli, transzcendens felé irányítja. A görög drámák színészeinek maszkja a rituális maszkból származik, de kapcsolatot tart a halotti maszkal is. A görög színjátszásban az álarc rituális ereje az idő múlásával egyre csökken. Az i. e. V. századi Hellaszban már inkább csak a művészi eszköztár része, még akkor is, ha Athénban a színjátszás mindvégig a Dionüszosz-kultusz örököse marad. A velencei karneválon használt tetszetős álarcok vagy a busójáráson ma használt maszkok – a népi alakoskodásnak e népi kultúrát túlélte, muzeális rekvizitumai – mögött mi már nem érzékelünk semmiféle mágikus jelenlétet. Egyszerű látványosság az egész.

A dráma születése körül a mai napig nagy viták dúlnak. Vannak, akik a kardalokból származtatják, mások a hóskultusz mondáiból, megint mások a népi játékokból vagy a halottsirató dalok hagyományából. A legáltalánosabb vélekedés szerint a görög dráma a kardalokból, a *dithürambosz*-ból, azaz a Dionüszosz-rítusokból született. A legkorábbi időkben a kar (*khorosz*) éneket és táncot mutatott be. Ez fejlődött tovább a kultuszban: a Dionüszian a kar dicsőítő énekeket adott elő. Ebből alakult ki a tragédia. Theszpisz volt az, aki (az i. e. VI. században) a dionüszikus kardalokhoz elbeszélést illesztett, amit a karvezető a karból kilépve mondott el. Később a neki felelgető színész színre lépett teremtve meg a dialogikus



Szophoklész márvány reliefje a hellenizmus korából (forrás: wikiwand.com)

drámai szituáció lehetőségét. (E szerepet eredetileg maga a költő viszi; Szophoklész az első, aki ezt megtagadja, megteremtve a lehetőségét annak, hogy a versenyben győztes költő nevével együtt a színész nevét is emlegesse az utókor.)

Aiszkhülosz, korai tragédiáit kivéve, melyek – például a *Perzsák* – még kifejezetten a kar szövegére épülnek, már két színészt szerepeltet. Ez megadja a lehetőséget arra, hogy a drámai dialógus megszülessen. (Annak ellenére, hogy erre már Theszpisz előtt is megvolt a lehetőség, hiszen az ekkoriban fellépő egyetlen színész a karvezetővel, a *korüphaioszzal* nyugodt lélekkel dialogizálhatott.) A drámai műveket Aiszkhülosztól kezdve a dialógusok uralják. (Szophoklész, Aiszkhülosz tanítványa növeli majd háromra az egyszerre jelenlévő színészek számát, még nagyobb teret adva a játéknak. Ezzel együtt a kar tagjainak létszámát is 12-ről 15-re emeli, ami lehetővé teszi, hogy a kar a *thümelén* 7+7+1 felállásban foglaljon helyet. A korüphaiosz negyedik színészként működhetett.)

Ennek a leszármazási változatnak fő forrása Arisztotelész. Ő írja a *Poétikában*, hogy a tragédia a Dionüszoszt dicsőítő dithüramboszok karvezetőinek tevékenységéből alakult ki. Az improvizatív szatírxjátékok idővel ünnepélyes, magasztos színezetet öltöttek, s a Dionüszosz szenvedéseit, halálát és feltámadását megjelenítő, a természet körforgásának hódoló kultikus jellegüket elveszítve egyfajta mámortalanított ünneppé finomodtak. A Dionüszian használatos maszkok ugyan megmaradtak, de az előadás már nem kötődött Dionüszoszhoz, csak a tetralógiák utolsó darabjaiban, a szatírxjátékokban maradt nyoma az orgiasztikus, elemi erejű pajzánságnak.

Arisztotelésszel egyetértve e szatírxjátékokat nevezhetjük meg a dráma őseiként. A Dionüszosz-kultusz Athénban elveszti orgiasztikus jellegét, és az oltárhoz járuló bakkhikus menet ünnepévé lesz. Ekkor teremődik meg szerinte a dráma lehetősége: az egymástól független dithüramboszok lassan tragédiává állnak össze.

Ám ezzel az evolúciós elmélettel először is az a baj, hogy a fejlődés folyamata nem mutatható ki. A tragédia úgy pattan elő a semmiből, mint Zeusz fejéből Pallasz Athéné: teljes fegyverzetben. Amikor Theszpisz előadja az első tragédiát, Dionüszosz már nincs sehol. Helyét a mitológia félistenei és *hérószai* foglalták el. Az előadás levált Dionüszoszról; ahogy a korabeli csalódott nézők mondták: uden prosz ton Dionüszon – semmi, ami Dionüszoszról (szólna). A tragédia készen áll. Már csak tökéletesíteni kell. Ez úgyben Theszpisz teszi meg az első fontos lépést – nem tudni, mihez képest –, amikor *hüpokritészt*, színészt alkalmaz, hogy közte és a karvezető között párbeszéd jöhessen létre.

Péterfy Jenő egy tanulmányában azt írja, hogy csak a keresztény misztériumokból elvont nézet, miszerint a dráma Dionüszosz isteni tetteinek és halálának mimésziséből keletkezett volna. „Dionüszosz ünneplésében csak a phalloszhordozók fölvonulása, tánc, tréfája tartozik most megfigyelésünk körébe, innen pedig a komédia származhatott, nem a tragédia” A komédia és a tragédia, mondja Péterfy, csak logikailag rokon, de a logika nem élet. Dionüszosz szenvedése és halála egyébként is orphikus termék, teszi hozzá, tehát a Peisztisztratidák kora előtt nem is létezhetett. A tragédia és a Dionüsziaiak kapcsolata nyilvánvaló, de ez a kapcsó-

lat Péterfy szerint nem a leszármazás formáját ölti.

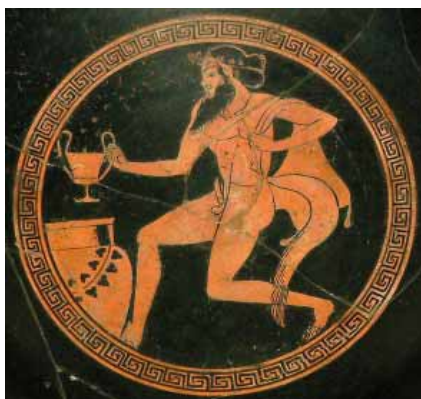
A következő probléma az, hogy a szatírként szereplőnek Athénban nem kecske-, hanem lófarkuk volt. Athénban a főszatír Pán eredetileg nem tartozik Dionüszosz környezetéhez. Péterfy azt írja, hogy a szatírok Athénban Arión előtt egyébként is ismeretlenek voltak. Itt Szilénoszok alkották Dionüszosz elragadtatott kíséretét (*thüiaszát*). Ezek alakulnak később kecskebakká, és a *tragosz* nevet kapják. Daluk a *tragódiá*.

Arión az első, aki dithüramboszait *troposz tragikosz*ban írja. Így, ekkor kapcsolódik össze Pán eszméje Dionüszoszával.

A Peloponnészosz felől ez a hatás a Peiszisztratidák idején éri el Athént, s amikor Peiszisztratosz megalapítja a Nagy-Dionüziát, akkor a szatírtánc és -ének már az ünnep részét képezi. Így kerül be a dór elem a tragédiába, teszi hozzá Péterfy. A dór dialektus a görög tragédiákban mindvégig jelen van: a kardal minden esetben dór nyelven szólal meg. A dór az attikainál keményebb, erőteljesebb hangzású. Talán ez is hozzájárult ahhoz, hogy használata a kardal nyelvében megmaradt, hiszen a kar az athéni tragédiában általában a közösség, a poliszhoz tartozás, a törvény szavát zengi, kollektív nézőpontból láttatva a cselekményt, és megakadályozva, hogy a darab túlságosan beleragadjon a szereplők „partikuláris” kínjaiba. Az emberek akkoriban a közösség szavát a rend, a sors kemény, zord hangjának hallhatták.

A tragédia születésére nézve érdekes adalékkal szolgál a Hadrianus korában működő görög szofista, Dzenobiosz: „A karok kezdetben Dionysos tiszteletére szoktak volt dithyrambost énekelni, de a költők később eltávolodtak ettől a szokástól és Aiasok meg kentaurosok írására adták a fejüket. Ezért a nézők gúnyolódva mondogatták: »Semmi köze Dionysoshoz!« E miatt később jónak látták szatírok színre vitelét, hogy ne keltsék azt a látszatot, mintha valóban megfeledeztek volna az istenről.” (ford.: Borzsák I.)

A drámában Dionüszoszt nélkülözni kénytelen közönség kollektív feljajdulása mindenesetre árulkodó jel. Valami valakinek akkor hiányzik, ha eredetileg ott volt. Dionüszosz nem-ottléte valószínűleg eredendő otlétének „deficiens módusza”. Az isten hiányként van jelen. Megint csak úgy tűnik, hogy a dráma elválaszt-hatatlan a Nüszia erdejében lakozó istentől. Kezdetben lőn Dionüszosz, aki az individuumot önmagából kiszakítva visszavezeti az eredendő egységhez, és az individuáció fájdalmát reprodukálva feloldja egy magasabb gyönyörben, „az egységes lét, illetve az egyetlen akarat túláradó gazdagságának részeseivé téve bennünket”. Dionüszosz tehát hordozó alapja a tragédiának, ő az egyetlen tragikus szereplő, „minden szereplő csak Dionüszosz maszkja”. Az individuum szenvedései az eredendő lét gyönyörében merülnek alá; ahhoz azonban, hogy a tragikum mocca-



Szatír ábrázolása Korzikán talált vörös alakos tányéron, Alalia, i. e. 450 körül (forrás: peripluscd.wordpress.com)

natlan gyönyöréből dráma, azaz cselekvés származhasson, Apollónra van szükség. A tragikus kar dionüszoszi énekének előterében zajlik az apollóni dráma: a karon mint a szereplők egyéni szenvedéseinek háttérfalán csapódik ki a történet. A háttérben mozdulatlanul álló kar előtt az élet drámáját mímelő színészek a változás világát képezik le, melynek háttérében ott a moccsatlan, parmenidészi lét.

Ez a lét zenél. Nem. Ez a lét zene. A kardal zenéjéből időről-időre kiválik a színészek *logosza*, de a kapcsolatot a karral sosem veszíti el, hogy végül teljesen visszaolvadjon szubsztrátumába. A fenyegető-magnetikus lét őszénjébe való beolvadás szép példája lehetett Nietzsche számára – aki feljegyzései szerint a létet sokszor átélte viharban és villámlásban – Aiszkhülosz *Leláncolt Prométheuszának* zárójele-nete, melyben a hős villámtól sújtva – a sziklával együtt, melyhez hozzáláncolták – a mélybe zuhan.

A *tragédia születésében* Dionüszosz mint affirmatív erő egészen Euripidészig tartja magát. „Euripidész eljöveteleig a tragikus hős továbbra is mindvégig Dionüszosz maradt (...), a görög színpad hírneves alakjai, Prométheusz, Oidipusz stb. mindannyian csak az eredeti hős, Dionüszosz más-más maszkjai.” Euripidész műveiben „a közönség feltolakszik a színpadra”, dionüszoszi és apollóni finom egyensúlya felbillen, az őselv ellillan. Amíg még jelen van, addig Nietzsche a színpadi maszk mögé bújtatott arcként látatja. „Az ekként megjelenő isten most úgy beszél, úgy cselekszik, mintha tévelygő, igyekvő, szenvedő individuum volna.” Ahogy Dionüszoszt ifjúkorában szétszaggatták a titánok, úgy tépi szét az indivi-



Tükör és maszk, a VIII. számú freskó a misztériumok házából, Pompei, i. e. 40 (fotó: Wolfgang Rieger, forrás: en.wikipedia.org)

duáció az embert. Maszkot tol elé, de a maszk mögött ott az igazi arc, mely érzi a szétdarabolt lényeg minden kínját.

Aiszkhülosz tragédiájában a leláncolt Prométheuszt, mielőtt megjelenének a keselyűk, hogy a máját tépjék, meglátogatja Ókeanosz. Prométheusz csodálkozik:

*„Mi ez megint? Hát eljöttél hozzám te is,  
hogy szenvedéseim tanúja légy? Hogyan  
merted hullámaid s a kővel önmagát  
beboltozó barlangot hagyni el, s a vas  
szülőanyját, e földet látogatni? Hogy  
balsorsomat lásd és együtt szenvedj velem?  
Hát nézd e látványt: azt, ki Zeusz barátja volt  
s egykor hatalmáért együtt küzdött vele,  
miatta mily kínok között vergődik itt.”*



Héraklész, Prométheusz és a sas korai hellén vázáképen (forrás: hpsyche.blogspot.com)

Mire Ókeanosz így felel:

*„Látom, Prométheusz, és tanácsra kész vagyok,  
javad keresve, bár fortélyos vagy te is.  
Ismerd meg tenmagad s változtass elveden,  
mert változott az úr az istenek fölött.”*



Dionüszosz és Thiaosz attikai feketealakos vázáképen, i. e. 525–500, Louvre, Párizs (forrás: commons.wikimedia.org)

Ne gondoljuk, hogy a delphoi Apollón-templom parancsának („Ismerd meg tenmagad!”) szó szerinti megisméltése pusztán a fordító, Trencsényi Waldapfel Imre műve. Ókeanosz az eredeti szövegben azt mondja: *gignószke szauton kai metharmoszai tropusz nusz*, ismerd meg magad, és változtasd meg új szokásaidat. A delphoi parancs Apollóntól, az olümposzi istenek világából érkezik. Ókeanosz e párbeszédben azért idézi, hogy Prométheuszt, a dionüszoszi lényt megzabolázza. Aiszkhülosznál ugyanis Prométheusz titánként szerepel. Amikor Zeusz, vagyis az olümposzi, „fényes” erő megküzdött apjával, Kronosszal, és a neki ellenszegülő titánokat, a „sötét” erő katonáit a Tartaroszba vetette, akkor – Nietzschevel szólva – Apollón győzött Dionüszosz fölött. Az istenek új ura Zeusz lett, aki azonban győzelmét Prométheusznak köszönhette. Amikor tehát Zeusz bűnéért, hogy ellopta a tüzet, leláncolja őt, nemcsak kegyetlenségéről, de hálátlanságáról is tanúbizonyságot tesz. Zeusz hálátlansága megfeleltethető annak a folyamatnak, amit Nietzsche így írt le: az apollóni világ elfedi a dionüszoszit, a tragédiából kivész a mélység, az apollóni tragédia a titáni elvet csak megszelídítve, leláncoltan viselheti el.

Hosszú monológban sorolja el Prométheusz, mi jót tett az emberekkel, egészen a konklúzióig:

*„Tudd meg tehát, egy röpke szó mindent kimond:  
ember minden tudása éntőlem való.”*

Mire a Karvezető:

„Ne nézd mérték felett az emberek javát,  
törődj saját bajoddal, így remélhetem,  
hogy majd bilincseid lehullanak s megint  
alábbvaló magánál Zeusznál sem leszel.”

A szenvedő Prométheusz bűne, hogy mértéken felül szerette az embert, s hogy nem fogadta meg a másik híres delphoi imperatívuszt: *méden agan*, semmit se túlzottan. Előbb Ókeanosz, majd a Karvezető próbálja jobb belátásra bírni. A Karvezető egyenesen arra szólítja fel, hogy saját, individuális bajával törődjön, mert akkor talál majd vissza a zeuszi magaslatokba. Hogy a zeuszi, olümposzi, apollóni világ az individuáció szférája, azt már láttuk. Dionüszosz ezzel szemben a föld és az ég titáni egységének istene. Ez az egység a titánok leverése után a múlté. Nem szabad beszélni róla, nem szabad megmutatni. Prométheusz az individualizációtól mentes, ősi világ szószólója. Le kell hát láncolni. A szószóló arcát maszk mögé kell rejtteni. A maszk: leláncolt arc.

Ez mindenesetre elég jól hangzik, de van-e értelme? Mit láncol le az arcon, mit tart féken a lélekben a maszk? Mi az, aminek nem szabad előjönnie ahhoz, hogy a Dionüszosz-misztériumok, majd a tragédiák nézői elragadtatva érezzék magukat?

Ez az elragadtatottság az, amit Nietzsche drámai ősjelenségnek mond: „...dionüszoszi mámorukban tömegek érzik úgy, hogy ilyen szellemsereg nyüzsgi körül őket, amellyel meghitt azonosságban élnek (...) egész sereg ember érzi elvarázsoltnak magát. Épp ezért a dithüramboszt lényegileg kell megkülönböztetnünk minden más kardaltól. A szüzek, akik babérággal a kezükben ünnepi menetben Apollón templomához vonulnak, s közben körmeneti éneket énekelnek, maradnak, akik voltak, és megőrzik rendes, polgári nevüket; a dithürambikus kar átváltozottak kórusa, akik polgári múltjukat, társadalmi helyzetüket tökéletesen elfelejtették: átváltak istenük időn és minden társadalmi szférán kívül eső szolgáivá. (...) Ebben az elvarázsoltságban a dionüszoszi megszállott szatírnak látja magát, szatírként pedig meglátja az istent...”

Az istent a megszállott nem valahol kívül, az „objektív valóságban” látja meg, hanem sokkal mélyebben: belül, önmagában. Az *Iliászban* Akhilleusz Agamemnónnal verekszik, és a vita hevében neki akar rontani ellenfelének. Ám amikor kirántaná kardját, ott terem Athéné, és hátulról lefogja őt. Ennek a jelenetnek görög értelme, hogy Akhilleuszban győzött a józan megfontolás. Ahol józanság van, ott Athéné van jelen. Akhilleusz, amikor leengedte kardját, fölismerte magában Athéné jelenlétét.

A görögök érzelmeiben és tetteiben istenek élnek. Amikor az emberi lélek a többiek felé megnyilvánul, az istenek előállnak. Előállnak, mert a mitikus értelmezési keret megidézi őket. Az emberi kapcsolattartásnak – hogy azt ne mondjam: a társadalom fenntartásának – legfontosabb eszköze az arc. Az arcról leolvasható, mi van belül. Az arc olyan tartály, amely kiegyenlíti a külső és belső nyomáskülönbséget, és az isteneket az emberek világába átszelídi.

A színpadi álarc ezt az átvezetést, ezt a megszelídítést akadályozza meg. Nem engedi, hogy az istenek jelenléte az emberi mimika formáját öltse. A színpadon látható emberi mozgásforma a kar tánca. A tánc az emberi mozgás rituális álarca. Nem engedi, hogy az istenek jelenléte a hétköznapi ember mozgásformáját öltse. Ugyanilyen viszonyban van a színpadon énekelt dal a beszéddel. Az álarcos színész tehát valóban maga az isten, maga Dionüszosz. Az isten megpillantása ejti ámulatba és elragadtatásba a nézőket. A maszkot viselő színészek szavai abból a lélekmélyből törnek elő, amelynek Dionüszosz az ura.

Az ókori görögök világában nem létezett a mai értelemben vett személy. Ők nem érezték úgy, hogy belső, lelki életükről naplót kellene vezetniük, és házi pszichológusuk sem volt. Nem tartották fontosnak sem az írást (v. ö. Platón *Phaidrosza*), sem a személyes életet, sem bensőjük marcangolását. (Érdekes, hogy sokan éppen ezt kérik számon. Péterfy Jenő például *Szophoklész* című tanulmányában így ír: „...De ebből látható egyszersmind Aiszkhülosznak mint drámaírónak egyoldalúsága is. A bűn és bűnhődés kapcsolata érdeklő elsősorban; kevésbé már az emberi szenvedélyek mint olyanok, a jellemek különböző vagy ellentétes volta, a lelki árnyalatok, egyáltalában az emberi boldogság vagy boldogtalanság.”) Az ember egy közösség része, és csakis mint ilyen egyedülálló. A héroszok és a kivételes képességű sztratégoszok azért átlagon felüliek, hogy ezzel a közösséget szolgálják, s Szókratész is azért vonul félre időnként, és mélyül el magában, hogy személyes tudását a dialógusba csepegtesse. Aki csak önmagára néz, az *idiótész*, magánember, akit a közösség kivet magából. Örök példája Narkisszosz.

A legteljesebb életű ember a görögök számára az, aki a legteljesebben átérzi, hogy a poliszhoz tartozik, és aki a legpontosabban betartja a közösségi élet szabályait. Ma nagyokat csodálkozunk az *aszzebeidáért*, istentelenségért elítélt Szókratészen, aki – holott tanítványai előkészítették szökéséhez az utat – inkább marad a siralomházban, és kiissza a bürökpoharat, mert bár saját megítélése szerint ártatlan, mégis úgy érzi, a polisz rendje mindenek fölötti.

Amikor az individuum megszületik, a *persona* nevet kapja. A *persona* a görög *prosópion* (= arc, maszk) latin megfelelője. Kezdetben színpadi maszkot és jogi szerepet jelent. Később a szó új értelmet nyer, és a középkor elejére már, ahogy Boëthius mondja, „az ésszerű természet individuális szubsztanciáját” jelöli. A *persona* jelentésmódosulása, írja Aron Gurevics *Az individuum a középkorban* című könyvében, az embercsoportok transzformációival és a csoportokat alkotó ember megváltozott világgépével áll kapcsolatban. A *persona* új fogalma volt az egyik



Gyermek szatír színpadi maszkkal, márvány, 67 cm, római birodalom, i. sz. 1. század, a New York-i Sotheby's aukciós ház árverésén (forrás: gcottraux.wordpress.com)

rése az Isten fogalmánál rendszerint megtorpanó középkori lélektannak, amelyen keresztül a személyiség mélyebb megértése felé megtörténhetett az áttörés.

Arról persze nincs szó, hogy az ókori vagy középkori persona mögött a mai értelemben vett személyiség bújt volna meg, amelyet ki kellett volna szabadítani Isten karmaiból. Gurevics így ír: „A persona fogalmának sok évszázados fejlődése során bekövetkezett változások bizonyággal szolgálhatnak arra, milyen nagymértékű kulturális átalakulásoknak kellett végbemenni, mielőtt az európai ember a személyiség lényegét kifejező tartalommal töltötte volna meg ezt a fogalmat.” Úgy tűnik, az ókorban nem létezett a mai értelemben vett személyiségtudat, mondja Gurevics. A sors olyan személytelen erő volt, amelynek az egyén tökéletesen alávetette magát. A személytelen, individuális jellemvonásokat nélkülöző ember örök, idealizált ragyogása bármelyik antik szobron megpillantható.

Könyvében Gurevics elemzi azt a folyamatot, amelynek során feltámad a személyiség. Azzal párhuzamosan, ahogy az individuum a polisz rendjében betöltött atomi létéből kivonul, és megismeri egyéni belső terét – tehát ahogy az uralkodó emberértelmezés a tudatos, sajátos tulajdonságokkal és önálló akarattal rendelkező lényt teremti meg –, bekövetkezik az a nyelvi átértelmeződés, melynek során a kezdetben maszkot jelentő persona egyre félreérthetlenebbül személyiséget jelent.

Egy kifelé és egy befelé húzó mozgást figyelhetünk meg. Az ember lényege kivonul a közösségből, félrehúzódik és önmaga lesz. A maszk megjelölésére használatos szó pedig beljebb húzódik, és már nem az arc védőrétegét jelenti, hanem az épp most megszületett legbensőbb lényegét. A közösségből kiváló individuum rögtön mint persona jelenik meg. A sorsból, poliszból kilépő ember faarca visszafordul, a hátrahagyottak felé. Mintha Orpheusz fordulna vissza távolodón, megkérgesedett arccal nyugtázva, hogy a többiek már nem követhetik őt.

## Attila Végh: Face Behind the Mask

In the current entry, the permanent author of the Glossary approaches the origin of Greek drama from the disintegration of ancient unity represented by Dionysus and the process of individualisation, the result of which is the birth of the *persona*, the personality breaking with the community. The phases of this development are examined from and made tangible



by the changing functions of the mask. It is emphasised, in the footsteps of Nietzsche, that the only inherently tragic character in Greek tragedy is Dionysus, and everyone else is merely Dionysus' mask. Prometheus is also an advocate of the ancient world which is free from individualisation, that is why he must hide his face behind the mask. However, the stage mask of the dithyrambic chorus in the tragedy prevents that “the presence of the gods should take on the form of human mimicry”; and the actor wearing a mask is, in fact, god himself, Dionysus. When the *persona*, which originally meant face and mask, comes to denote the concept of personality unmistakably, the mask is going to be an expression of the individual awaking to itself.



# „Belső mozgatóerőnk a kísérletezés, a keresés és a játék volt”

Pinczés István rendezőt Ungvári Judit kérdezi

**Pinczés István:** Soha nem készültem színházi pályára. Tanár akartam lenni, nagyon erős tanár-személyiségek vettek körül és hatottak rám már a középiskolában is. Sárospatakon több szimpatikus és nagy formátumú pedagógus befolyásolta az „ébredésemet” a világra, édesapám is tanárembernek készült, végül nem az lett. Már Sárospatakon bekapcsolódtam a diákszínjátszásba, verseket mondtam. Amikor befejeződött a mutálásom, egészen jó hangom lett, és ezt felfedezték a középiskolában. Speciális angol tagozatos osztályba jártam, ott is viszonylag sokszor kellett szerepelnem, de mint versmondó is sokszor indultam különböző versenyeken. Színész viszont nem akartam lenni, nem tartottam ezt komoly dolognak akkoriban. Úgy gondoltam, hogy a tanár, aki gyerekeket nevel, az szebb és hasznosabb foglalkozás a társadalomban, mint a szórakoztatás. Talán másodikos lehettem a gimnáziumban, amikor Sátoraljaújhelyen láttuk Szakonyi Károly *Adáshiba* című művét a Miskolci Nemzeti Színház előadásában. Ez már kicsit megfogott, elgondolkoztatott, főleg a realista történet és a „csodatévő” kontrasztja miatt, de emlékszem egy még korábbi debreceni élményemre is. Valamilyen „termelési dráma” ment éppen, nem sokat fogtam föl az egészből, de az megmaradt, hogy volt ott egy ember, aki éppen olyan volt, mint egy valóságos üzemvezető. A többiekéről tudtam, hogy színészek, akik egy szerepet játszanak, hamisan is csengett sokszor, ahogy a szöveget mondták, de róla azt gondoltam, ő biztosan nem színész, mert neki elhittem, amit játszott. Csak jóval később tudtam meg, hogy ő volt Latinovits Zoltán. Még arra is emlékszem ebből az időszakból, hogy előadás előtt megnézhattük a színházat, felmentünk a színpadra is, és meglepődtem, milyen kicsinek tűnik a nézőtér onnan. Nem is gondoltam ak-

kor még, hogy egyszer ide kötődik majd a sorsom... Ezek voltak tehát az első színházi élményeim, nem találkoztam túl sok profi előadással. Sárospatakon diákszínházi voltam, felléptem például Görgey alakítójaként Illyés Gyula *Fáklyalángjának* egyfelvonásos változatában, a *Tűz és víz* című darabban, és részt vettem más, többnyire történelmi témájú diák-produkciókban is. Megcsapott ugyan annak a szele, hogy milyen érdekes más bőrébe bújni, de nem volt ez erős, meg sem fordult a fejemben a színházi pálya. Azután Debrecenbe kerültem egyetemre, és bekapcsolódva az egyetemi színházi életbe már komolyabban kezdett foglalkoztatni a színház. Szerkesztettünk irodalmi műsorokat, és teljes előadások is létrejöttek ebben az időszakban. Angol szakosként jártam Londonban, ahol sikerült három színházi előadást látnom.

*A Hair* és a *Jesus Christ Superstar* mellett a legnagyobb élményem Marcel Marceau önálló estje volt. Annyira megfogott a pantomim stilizált költőisége, hogy amint hazaértem Debrecenbe, mindjárt megszerveztem egy tanfolyamot. Regős Pali bácsi járt hozzánk hetente kétszer, kemény, ötórás foglalkozásokon, három éven keresztül ismerkedtünk a pantomim alapjaival. Közben végig arra készültem, hogy tanár leszek, az angol nyelv, a magyar nyelv és irodalom egyaránt nagyon érdekelt, azt gondoltam, középiskolában vagy az egyetemen fogok majd tanítani.

**Ungvári Judit:** *Mikor változott a helyzet? Hogyan fordult komolyabbra a színházi érdeklődésed?*

P. I.: Talán azzal kezdődött, hogy '77-ben, még mielőtt a diplomámat megkaptam, elindultunk a *Ki mit tud?*-on a Mimosz nevet viselő pantomim-együttesemmel. Balázs Bélának *A könnyű ember* című bábjátékát tettük át „élőbe”, és megcsillogtattuk a pantomim-tudásunkat, amivel sikerült megnyerni a kategóriánkat. Máig emlékszem, hogy a Moszkvában vásárolt görkorcsolyámmal léptem fel, mivel nálunk ilyen még nem lehetett kapni. Aztán, ahogy elvégeztük az egyetemet, szétszéledt a társaság. A Mimosz egyébként a Főnix együttesből nőtt ki, amelyben akkoriban a gyakorlottabb, idősebb gárda dominált, például Kun János, aki később előadóművészként nagyon szép anyagokat vitt kö-



Marcel Marceau (1923–2007)  
(forrás: knownpeople.net)



Pinczés István 1977-ben a *Ki Mit Tud?*  
döntőjében (forrás: youtube.com)



Balázs Béla: *A könnyű ember*, középen Pinczés István, -  
Mimosz Együttes, 1977 (forrás: youtube.com)

színre például a *Sachsenhauseni emlékmű* című mozgásszínházat, Pilinszky verseire és Schaár Erzsébet szobraira komponálva. A Főnixszel a 70-es évek időszakában megfordultunk az egyetemi színház fesztiválok, így láthattuk a többi egyetemi színház munkáit is. Nagy hatással voltak rám Paál István produkciói a szegedi egyetemistákkal, megnéztem a legendássá vált *Kőműves Kelement*, ami a Grotowski-féle „szegény színház” alapján készült, és a *Petőfi-rockot*, amelyben volt osztálytársaim is szerepeltek. Ekkor ismertem meg Árkosi Árpádot, Ács Jánost. Nagyszerű volt ez a rácsodálkozás Grotowski világára, arra, hogy milyen mágikus hatást tud kiváltani ez a „szegény színház” megközelítés a stúdiószínház zárt terében, s hogy a közönséghez közvetlen közel milyen elementárisan hat a színész jelenléte.

U. J.: *Ez az időszak valóban nagyon sok izgalmas színházi alkotót dobott felszínre az egyetemi közegekből. Ez megerősített téged abban, hogy érdemes színházzal foglalkozni? Ez a lendület röptett át téged a „köszínházi” létbe?*

P. I.: Én akkoriban még elég kevés kőszínházi produkciót láttam. Még mindig nem gondoltam életpályaként a színházra, azt hittem, legfeljebb majd műkedvelőként, hobbiból foglalkozom vele. Mégis sodródtam efelé a pálya felé, azt lehet mondani. Ma már tudom, hogy igazából akkor már ez érdekelt. Az említett *Sachsenhauseni emlékmű* című előadásunkon nagyon sokat dolgoztunk, de az akkori egyetemi vezetőség nem nézte jó szemmel, mert ugye egy katolikus költő versei szerepeltek benne. Emiatt nem javasolták a fesztiválon való részvételt, és akkor kitaláltuk, hogy előadjuk az egészet némán, a lengyel Krzysztof Penderecki avantgárd zenéjére, nagy sikerünk volt vele. Ezt Kun János rendezte, de kvázi-koreográfusként nagyon sok ötlettel járultam hozzá én is az előadáshoz, játszottam is benne. Érdekes módon egyetemistaként kevésszer látogattunk el a Csokonai Színházba, nem a mi világunk



Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999)

volt. Két előadásra azért élményszerűen emlékszem: a *Hamletre* (1976, r: Sándor János) Cserhalmi Györggyel és a *Szeget szeggel* (1976, r: Sándor János) előadására. A *Hamlet*ben akkor ráadásul nagyon jó szereplőgárda működött, többek között Pécsi Ildikó, Reviczky Gábor is játszott benne. Izgalmas előadás volt. A diplomaszerezés után egy évet tanítottam középiskolában, de közben a debreceni orvosi egyetem és az akkori Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem irodalmi színpadát is vezettem, sőt, a KISZÖV színpadától is kaptam felkérést. Az irodalmi színpadokat minősítő egyik megyei versenyen Rencz Antal, a Csokonai Színház akkori igazgató főrendezője megkérdezte tőlem, hol tanultam rendezni, s elárulta, hogy lát bennem fantáziát. Mondtam, hogy tanítok, hobbiból vezetek színpadot, és tervem szerint később az angol tanszéken folytatnám a pályafutásomat. Akkortájt üresedett meg egy rendezőasszisztensi állás a színházban, és mivel a középiskolai tanításban nem éreztem igazán jól magam, úgy gondoltam, ez egy jó lehetőség. Legalább megtanulom, mi kell a rendezéshez, hogyan instruáljam a színészeket, és így tovább. De közben továbbra sem tettem le arról, hogy egyszer majd az angol tanszékre kerülök.

U. J.: *Aztán mégis ott maradtál a „hivatásos” színház világában. S a színháztudományban is profi lettél: 2009-ben doktori címet szereztél a színművészetin.*

P. I.: A rendező szakkal is megpróbálkoztam, még mielőtt asszisztensnek szegődtem volna a Csokonai Színházhoz, de a harmadik rostán kihullottam. A Csokonai kerülvén éppen igazgatóváltás volt, Bényei Józsefet váltotta Gali László<sup>1</sup>. Főrendezőnek pedig Lengyel György jött, aki Szabó Magda *Régimódi történetét* (1979) vitte színre először, és mellé kerültem asszisztensnek. Rögtön említette, hogy látott a felvételin, sajnálja, hogy nem kerültem be, de mi lenne, ha a most induló színház-elméleti osztályába jelentkeznék. Ez posztgraduális képzés volt, így jól jött, hogy már van egy diplomám, ráadásul angolul is tudtam szakirodalmat olvasni. Ez elég kiegyensúlyozott helyzetnek bizonyult: az elméletet a főiskolán tanultam, a gyakorlatot pedig ugyancsak Len-



W. Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, Csokonai Színház, 1976, r: Sándor János, a címszerepben: Cserhalmi György (fotó: Balogh P. László)



Lengyel György rendező, színházigazgató

<sup>1</sup> Bényei József (1934–) 1976-tól 1979-ig volt a Csokonai Színház igazgatója. Az őt váltó Gali László (1943–) 1979-től 1986-ig töltötte be az igazgató-főrendezői posztot. Lengyel György (1936–) 1979 és 1981 között ugyanitt művészeti vezető volt.

gyel György mellett, a színházban. Nagyon jól éreztem magam, ez volt az iskolám Lengyel és Gali mellett. Életem első önálló „nagyszínházi” rendezését is itt kaptam, 1981-ben Kroetz *Felső-Ausztria* és *A fészek* című egyfelvonásosait dolgoztuk össze egységes darabbá a Csokonai Horváth Árpád Stúdiószínházában. Egy évvel korábban pedig Kazincbarcikán az ifj. Horváth István országos amatőr színházi fesztiválon – ahol külföldi csoportok is részt vettek – Csehov *Leánykérésével* szerepeltünk az 1979-ben általam alapított Debreceni Színház Stúdióval, és ennek révén jutottunk el New Yorkba, ami egy új fejezetet nyitott az életemben. Ez az intézmény<sup>2</sup> színészképzéssel is foglalkozott: Csikos Sándor a verselemzést vitte, volt tánc- és énekkurzus, én elsősorban a mozgás oktatásával foglalkoztam. Olyan színészek kerültek ki ebből a műhelyből, mint Eszenyi Enikő, Csujá Imre, Szarvas József, a későbbi években Bertók Lajos, Varga Mária, Illyés Róbert, vagy a Csokonai Színházban máig játszó Garay Nagy Tamás, és sokan mások váltak színésszé ezek közül a fiatalok közül. Amikor Rencz Antal elkerült Debrecenből, átvettem a stúdió vezetését, és igyekeztem több produkciót létrehozni. Szívesen emlékszem vissza például Materlinck *A vakok* című darabjára, ebben tűnt föl például az előbb említett Varga Marika, még középiskolásként. Említhetem Bertók Lajost is, aki szintén középiskolásként bukkant fel Sartre *Zárt tárgyalásában*, és így született meg Csehov *Leánykérése* is, ami emlékezetem szerint második díjas lett a kazincbarcikai fesztiválon. Az amerikai vendégszereplésen találkoztunk a japán tojamai színházzal, és innen indult el egy ma már harmincnégy évre visszatekintő kapcsolat. Ennek köszönhetően többször rendeztem Japánban, hatott is rám ez a színházkultúra, úgyhogy Magyarországon is rendeztem később japán darabokat: *Az édes mérég* (1997) címmel öt kőgént a Horváth Árpád Stúdiószínházban, japán mesejátékot a Vojtina bábszínházban. Ez inspirálta *A sors gyermekei* (1994) című izgalmas produkcióm, amelyben hat ókori görög dráma alapján szerkesztett szövegre a kabuki kifejezőeszközeit alkalmazó előadást hoztunk létre. Ebben egy Amerikában élő japán mester dolgozott együtt velünk, két hónapig tanította a színészeknek a kabuki mozgásrendszerét. Ez azért is érdekes volt, mert ő nagyon pontosan tudta, hogyan kell nem ázsiai testalkatú embereket oktatni erre a mozgásformára. Számomra azért fontos ez, mert kicsit „megfertőzött” a japán színház, az a fajta stilizáció, ami abban megnyilvánul, az a műgond, ahogyan is ott előadásokat hoznak létre. Fordítva is működött a kapcsolat, hiszen rendeztem is ott, elsősorban magyar darabot (Örkény *Tótékját*, Szép Ernőt, Füst Milánt). Ez nem túl egyszerű feladat, ugyanis a japánok színházi kultúrája teljesen más, mint amit itt megszoktunk. A magyar színészeknek sokkal könnyebb volt elfogadható szinten megtanítani a kabuki és kőgőgen mozgáselemeit, mint a japánoknak megmagyarázni mondjuk az örkényi groteszk játékmódját.

<sup>2</sup> A Kölcsey Ferenc Önismereti–Tehetségondozó Stúdió 1978-ban jött létre Rencz Antal (1942–) vezetésével, aki 1975-től 1979-ig a Csokonai Színház rendezője volt. Ez a közvetlen előzménye az egy évvel később önálló amatőr színházként létrejövő Debreceni Színház Stúdióknak.

U. J.: *Indulásodkor az irodalommal is szoros volt a kapcsolatod, fordítottál is. Ezt az ambíciódat teljesen elsöpörte a színház?*

P. I.: Azt lehet mondani, igen, elsöpörte. Pedig annak idején kortárs angol versfordításaim jelentek meg antológiákban, nyertem a Nagyvilág novellafordító pályázatán. Verstannal is komolyan foglalkoztam, szakdolgozatom is ebben a témakörben született az angol tanszéken Abádi Nagy Zoltán tanár úr irányításával.<sup>3</sup> Deme Zoltán<sup>4</sup> barátomtól sokat tanultam, aki Szuromi Lajos tanár úrtól<sup>5</sup> sajátította el a verstani ismereteket. Az időmértékes, a hangsúlyos és a szimultán verseléssel egyaránt behatóan foglalkoztam, elsősorban az angol és amerikai 20. századi versek formahű átültetése érdekelt. Az angolban hangsúlymérték van, nem a rövid és hosszú szótagok adják a ritmikát, a tartalomhoz való hűség mellett nagyon érdekelt ennek a ritmikának a megszólaltatása magyarul. Egy keveset foglalkoztam Arany János balladáival, illetve Ady Endre angolra fordításával. Nagyon izgalmas kutatások és stúdiumok voltak ezek, de a színház valahogy elsöpörte őket. Elvértve most is fordítgatok, a *Twist Olivérről* szóló musical dalszövegeit 2000-ben bemutatott kecskeméti előadásomhoz magam készítettem, és a sepsiszentgyörgyi *Diploma után* című musical Simon and Garfunkel, Beatles, Rolling Stones, Doors dalszövegeit is én fordítottam le 2007-ben énekelhető nyelvre – ez a hobbim ma is megvan. DLA disszertációm melléktermékeként lefordítottam Beckett saját angol szövegváltozata alapján a *Godot-ra várva* című ősz-abszurdot. A magyar színházak a franciából készült magyar fordítást használták eddig; pedig a két mű szöveganyaga és stílusa jelentős mértékben különbözik! Mostanában John Lennon szövicces novellaszerűsegeinek fordításával szórakoztatom magamat, hobbi gyanánt.

U. J.: *Említetted korábban a Grotowski-élményt. Többször is rendeztél pályafutásod alatt lengyel darabokat, így például elsők között vitted színpadra Gombrowicz Operettjét Magyarországon. Milyen volt a kapcsolatod a 70-es, 80-as években európai viszonylatban meghatározó lengyel színházzal?*

P. I.: Szerencsére Debrecennek testvérvárosa volt Lublin, így többször is volt alkalmam kijutni Lengyelországba, találkozni ezzel a nagyon expresszív, nagyon avantgárd, nagyon izgalmas színházi vi-



F. Dosztojevskij: *Ördögök*, Stary Teatr, Krakó 1972, tervezte és rendezte: Andrzej Wajda (forrás: cyfrowemuzeum.stary.pl)

<sup>3</sup> Abádi Nagy Zoltán (1940–) amerikanista, a Debreceni Egyetem angol tanszékének professzora.

<sup>4</sup> Deme Zoltán (1949–) filmrendező, irodalomtörténész.

<sup>5</sup> Szuromi Lajos 1936–2010, a Debreceni Egyetem irodalomtörténésze, a verstan neves szakembere.

lággal. Egyik lefontosabb színházi élményem máig az az *Ördögök*, amit a krakkói Stary Teatr előadásában láttam, Andrzej Wajda 1971-ben készült rendezésében. Ugyanígy volt alkalmam látni Henryk Tomaszewski pantomim-együttesét, amely aztán Debrecenben is vendégszerepelt a kerekasztal lovagjairól szóló előadás-sal. Ezek hatására kezdtem el Rózewicz, Mrożek, Gombrowicz műveit olvasgatni. A Csokonai Színházban szerencsére több rendező, tervező is megfordult a már említett lublini kapcsolatnak köszönhetően. Például Stanisław Tymnek *A hajó* című produkcióját lengyel rendező állította színpadra a Csokonai Színházban. Később lazult ez az intenzív kötődés a lengyel színházhoz a teátrumban. De ezek az élmények vezettek el a Mrożek- és Gombrowicz-rendezésekhez (1996 – Gombrowicz: *Operett*; 2001 – Mrożek: *Özvegyek*).

U. J.: *Már az első rendezésem is stúdióban valósult meg, és később is meghatározónak bizonyultak a pályádon a stúdiószínházi méretekben megvalósuló előadásaid.*

P. I.: Az első darab, a már említett *Felső-Ausztria* egy különös, hiperrealista nyelven íródott, igazi kihívás volt ennek megfelelő közeget teremteni. Olyannyira realista volt, hogy a fordító (Oravecz Imre) is suk-sükölve ültette át. Utólag végiggondolva a munkáimat három szempont szerint lehet talán csoportba sorolni, ezek közül az egyik mindenképpen ennek a hiperrealizmusnak a megjelenése a színpadon. Ez a nagyon „életközeli” minőség, a mindenfajta teatralitás kerülése, a lélektani realizmussal megközelített színészi játék nyilvánult meg az olyan rendezéseimben, mint például Schwajda *Segítségé* 1986-ból, Spiró *Csirkefeje* 1989-ből (Bertók Lajos első nagy szerepe). 1990-ben jött Garaczi *Imogája*, amelynek a díszlete egy lerobbant falusi presszó volt, bár ott azzal a furcsasággal, hogy Garaczinak a posztmodern dramaturgiája és polifon nyelvezete már több volt, mint dokumentarizmus: a szereplők egy érdekes vegyülék-nyelven beszéltek, ami egyszerre volt emelkedett és alpári. Ebbe a vonulatba sorolom még a *Szigorúan ellenőrzött vonatok* 1999-ből, Havel *Audienciájának „önbesúgós”* történetét 1989-ből, a vitriolosan satirikus *Mesterkurzust* 1990-ből (Sztálin kommunista zenét ír Prokofjevvel és Sosztakoviccsal), amik egyébként kifejezetten bátor vállalások voltak a



Háy János: *Gézagyerek*, Csokonai Színház, 2001, r: Pinczés István (fotó: Máthé András)

rendszer váltás környékén, nem sokkal azután, hogy az utolsó európai diktátort a szomszédos Romániában kivégezték. Ilyen volt Hamvai Kornél Márton *partijelző fázis* (1999) című darabja is az önkéntes besúgóról. A legmarkánsabb, nemzetközi sikereket is hozó produkciója az ilyen típusú előadásaimnak Háy János *A Gézagyerek* (2001)

című „istendramája” volt. Rendezése-  
im másik csoportja viszont teljesen el-  
rugaskodik a hagyományos értelemben  
vett realizmustól, mind nyelvi vonatko-  
zásban, mind rendezési megoldásaiban,  
végletekig elvont, stilizált világot te-  
remt. Ennek legeklatánsabb példája ta-  
lán Borbély Szilárd /*kamera.man*/ című,  
stilizált mozgású, költőien elvont nyel-  
ven megszólaló tükörijátéka volt, ame-  
lyet 1999-ben rendeztem. De ide tar-  
toznak formailag az olyan japán ihletésű  
rendezések is, amelyekről már beszél-  
tem, mint *A sors gyermekei*. A harmadik  
vonulat pedig a – mondjuk így – vegyes  
esztétikai minőségekből kikevert irodal-  
mi alapanyagokból jön létre, a groteszk,  
az abszurd, a szatíra, a tragikomikum vi-  
lága ez – Örkény, Jarry, Dürrenmatt,  
Mrožek, Gombrowicz, Hrabal, vagy a  
lírizált-stilizált világú darabok: Parti  
Nagy „huszerettje”, Darvasi László „szorongó komédiái” és így tovább. Jut eszem-  
be, van egy negyedik csoport is: rendeztem vagy húsz musicalt és rockoperát is (*La  
Mancha*, *Koldusopera*, *Godspell*, *Chicago*, *Oliver*, *Légy jó mindhalálig*, *Sztár csinálók*,  
*Kiáltás a szeretetért*, *Laura*, *Diploma után* stb.), de a zenés rendezés egy másik beszél-  
getés tárgya lehetne.

U. J.: *A rendszerváltással szabadabbá, nyitottabbá vált színházi terepnek köszönhe-  
tően a 90-es években – Dobák Livia dramaturggal közösen – olyan stúdiószínházi soro-  
zatot indítottatok el a debreceni téátrumban, amely írók, költők egész sorát avatta drá-  
maszerzővé. Miért éreztetek erre késztetést? Mennyire volt ez termékeny a színházi  
alkotómunka szempontjából?*

P. I.: Nagyon sok kortárs darabot mutattunk be ebben az időszakban sorozat-  
szerűen a stúdiószínházban; a DESZKÁ-n „megemlékezett” magyar ősbemuta-  
tók mellett majdnem ugyanennyi külföldit is. Már említettem Havel *Audienciáját*  
vagy Pownel *Mesterkurzusát*, de angol, ír, kanadai, norvég darabokat is, gyakran az  
érintett országból meghívott vendégrendező, -tervező közreműködésével. A ma-  
gyar darabok rendkívül sokféle írói-esztétikai világot képviseltek, lehetőséget adva  
sokféle színházi előadási forma megteremtésére. Például Darvasi Lászlónak négy  
ősbemutatója is volt Debrecenben, mindegyiket az emelkedett líraiság hatotta át,  
mégis más jellegű, formájú, tartalmú előadás lett a *Szív Ernő estéje* (1995), a *Vizs-  
gálat a rózsák ügyében* (1993), a *Bolond Helga* vagy az *Argentína*. Garaczi László  
*Imogája* (1990) klasszikusan „egy tér – egy idő – egy cselekmény” előadás volt, de  
a *Fesd feketére!* (1995) című darabját például sajátos dramaturgiával, a szimultán



Borbély Szilárd: *kamera.man* (tükörijáték), Csoko-  
nai Színház Horváth Árpád Stúdiószínház, 1999,  
r: Pinczés István (fotó: Máthé András)



Darvasi László: *Vizsgálat a rózsák ügyében*, Csokonai Színház Horváth Árpád Stúdiószínház, Debrecen, 1993, r: Pinczés István, a fiú szerepében: Bertók Lajos (fotó: Máthé András)

geteg helyszínét nyíló-csukódó, változtatható nagyságú képkivágások segítségével teremtettük meg, s ezek a formai eszközök a kitűnő színészi alakításokkal egyetemben mindig más-más előadásvilágot teremtettek. Nagyon izgalmas időszak volt ez, amikor összeért az alkotók, illetve a közönség „kisszínházi” formák iránti igénye. Úgy gondoltuk Dobák Líviával, hogy érdeklik az embereket a kis térben létrehozott, „kísérletezősebb”, elevenbe vágó problematikájú produkciók. Ehhez társult az alkotók (rendezők, színészek, tervezők) belső igénye is, hogy itt a lehetőség e kortárs darabokban a színészi játékot megújítani, másfajta eszköztárat előhívni ebben az addig nem szokványos térben, hiszen a stúdiószínház nézőközeli játéktérében élni kellett a szerepet, a nagyszínpadi játékmódor hamisnak bizonyult és lelepleződött. Nekem mint rendezőnek nagyon sokat lehetett játszani a színészi munkába „beleszólva” is, de a térrel is, mindenféle új megoldást kitalálni. Belső



Hamvai Kornél: *Márton partjelző fázis*, Csokonai Színház Horváth Árpád Stúdiószínház, Debrecen, 1998, r: Pinczés István (fotó: Máthé András)

mozgatóerőnk a kísérletezés, a keresés és a játék volt. 1987-ben kezdődött tizenhat éves főrendezői időszakom alatt tizenkilenc magyar darabot mutattunk be, közülük tizenhat ősbemutató volt. Ez nagyon nagy teljesítmény a színház vezetősége és közvetlen munkatársaim részéről is, úgy gondolom. Komoly szakmai-kritikai figyelem irányult ekkor ránk. Kezdetben még véletlenszerűen, aztán már tudatosan vállalva a rendszerességet mutattuk be a műveket ebben a sorozat-

mozgatóerőnk a kísérletezés, a keresés és a játék volt. 1987-ben kezdődött tizenhat éves főrendezői időszakom alatt tizenkilenc magyar darabot mutattunk be, közülük tizenhat ősbemutató volt. Ez nagyon nagy teljesítmény a színház vezetősége és közvetlen munkatársaim részéről is, úgy gondolom. Komoly szakmai-kritikai figyelem irányult ekkor ránk. Kezdetben még véletlenszerűen, aztán már tudatosan vállalva a rendszerességet mutattuk be a műveket ebben a sorozat-

<sup>6</sup> Hamvai Kornél: *Márton partjelző fázis*; bemutató: 1998.

ban. Szerzővé, drámaíróvá avattuk Garaczi Lászlót, Darvasi Lászlót, Parti Nagy Lajost, Borbély Szilárdot, Háy Jánost, játszottunk Németh Ákost, Kárpáthy Pétert, a magyarokon kívül ment a stúdióban Havel, David Pownel, Helen Edmundson, Mrožek, és a „félklasszikus” Brecht és Beckett is, hogy csak néhány szerzőt említsek.

U. J.: *Ha már Beckett szóba került, hadd kérdezzem meg: miért éppen ebből a témából született meg a doktori értekezésed?*

P. I.: Az egyetemen rögtön az első évben találkoztam ezzel a művel kötelező olvasmányként. A cél nyilván a beszélt modern angol nyelv gyakorlása volt. Ekkor ébredtem rá arra, hogy – miután Beckett franciául írta meg a darabot eredetileg, és innen fordították magyarra – mennyire nem egyezik a franciából fordított szöveg és a későbbi letisztultabb angol változat, amit maga a szerző fordított angolra. Már akkor úgy éreztem, hogy ez egyúttal komoly átdolgozást is jelentett. Amikor jóval később a Csokonai Színházban megszűnt a státuszom, újra eszembe jutott ez a probléma, és elkezdtem vele foglalkozni. Szisztematikusan végigvettem az új szövegrészeket, feltártam, hogy milyen új minőségeket hoz az angol változat, mennyiben érlelte tovább Beckett ezt a művet, és ezekből állt össze aztán a doktori dolgozatom. Érdekes kérdés, miért fordításnak veszi a szerző, hiszen szinte új darabnak is tekinthető, a szövegnek úgy harminc százaléka teljesen új. Sok mindent hozzáírt, van, amit kihúzott belőle, sőt olyan is, amit átírt. Sokkal elvontabb, általánosabb ez a változat, több benne az abszurd elem. Rengeteget kellett kutatni egy-egy szófordulat, utalás után, tele van az angol szöveg bibliai utalásokkal, sokkal inkább, mint ahogy az a franciából fordított szövegben tükröződik. A disszertációm mellékleteként lefordítottam e művet én is, és akkor meg is jelent ez a szöveg a Nagyvilág hasábjain. Amikor lehetőségem adódott, meg is rendeztem a Csokonaiban, bár ez még egy „hibrid” változat volt, nem teljesen az általam lefordított szöveg alapján dolgoztunk. Érdekesség, hogy kötetben éppen az angol–francia jogvita miatt nem tudtuk kiadni, a francia jogtulajdonos ugyanis azt állítja, hogy az angol verzió nem önálló mű, hanem fordítás. Itthon is az volt az Európa Kiadó álláspontja, hogy nem érdemes újrafordítani. Felolvasószínházban viszont elhangzott több helyen is az én változatom.

U. J.: *Beszéltünk az imént a három általad követett irányvonalról. Visszatekintve hogy látod, melyik volt a legizgalmasabb?*

P. I.: Talán a Háy-előadások rendezői vonalát követném továbbra is, ha lenne rá lehetőségem, hogy folytassam a kísérletezést. Én azonban nem tartozom azok



Parti Nagy Lajos: *Ibusár* (huszerett), Csokonai Színház Horváth Árpád Stúdiószínház, Debrecen, 1992, r: Pinczés István (fotó: Máthé András)

közé a rendezők közé, akiket egyetlen téma érdekel, és azt próbálják körbejárni minden előadásukban. Ilyen volt Paál István például, aki folyamatosan a hatalom és az ember viszonyát boncolgatta. Nálam viszont valahogy úgy alakult, hogy a munkáim mindig újabb és újabb színházi nyelv kipróbálását tették lehetővé. A *Gézagerek* sikere a POSZT-on, Lengyelországban és Németországban talán azt igazolja, hogy az itthoni és a külföldi nézőkben is sikerült valamit eltalálnunk. A rendszer-váltás után még egy évtizedig érdekesnek bizonyultak ezek az új dramaturgiájú, szokatlan színházi térben létrejövő, költői, vagy éppen a posztmodern ízlésvilágból táplálkozó produkciók. A kilencvenes években ez a fajta műhelymunka egy szerencsés konstellációnak volt köszönhető az írók, színészek, tervezők között; hasonló szándék mozgatót minket, és voltak ösztöndíjak, támogatások, amiket becsatornázhattunk. De azután jöttek a magyar színházi életben másfajta műhelyek, sokkal radikálisabban gondolkodó alkotók, illetve közösségek: a Krétakör, a Szputnyik, Pintér Bélák, a Forte, a Maladype, és még sok más független csapat. Mi így vagy úgy mindig az irodalmi alapanyagból indultunk ki, de azóta létjogosultságot nyertek olyan színházi beszédmódok is, amelyekben az improvizatív formák, a mozgás, a kollektív szövegek, a szövegmontázsok dominálnak. Vidnyánszky Attila is jó példa arra az alkotási folyamatra, amelyben nem a szövegszerűen megírt darab interpretációja a fontos, hanem egyfajta polifon hangzás, amelyben a szöveg sokszor csupán apropó és a zene is nagyon hangsúlyos elem. Számos példát lehetne még felhozni más módszerekre is: az improvizációs színházat vagy az olyan törekvéseket, ahol a valóság „írja” a szöveget, mint az idei DESZKA Fesztiválon is jó néhány előadás esetében.

## “Our Inner Drives Were Experimentation, Quest and Play”

Judit Ungvári Interviews Director István Pinczés

The directing career of István Pinczés (b. 1953) began at Csokonai Színház (Csokonai Theatre), Debrecen. Having graduated from the Faculty of Arts in Hungarian and English, he joined this institution as assistant director in 1978, became its director (1983–1987), senior director (1987–1991), then managing director (1991–1993), and was its leading

director between 1997 and 2002. At a professional accompanying event to this year’s DESZKA Festival, he recalled the “golden age” of contemporary Hungarian dramas from the regime change to the beginning of the 2000s together with two authors, László Darvasi and László Garaczi as well as dramaturge Lívia Dobák at Csokonai Színház, Debrecen, on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The panel discussion was a precursor to this interview, which gives an outline, starting from the years related to the amateur student theatre movement, of this experimentally-minded director’s impressive oeuvre and very broad genre repertoire.



A zalaegerszegi Griff Bábszínház igazgatójaként 2013-ban