

ПРОБЛЕМИ НА ИЗКУСТВОТО

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СЪДЪРЖАНИЕ

Ромео Попилиев. Съпротивата на пиесите за съпротивата на Георги Марков.....	3
Камелия Николова. Един интензивен диалог: новата британска драма и българският театър.....	10
Николай Йорданов. Избори и предпочитания. Чуждата драматургия в репертоара на българските театри (1990–2012).....	21
Асен Терзиев. „Госпожица Юлия“ през 2012 и постмодерната интерпретация.....	27
Румяна Николова. Театърът и текстът на документа.....	31
Йоана Спасова-Дикова. Текстът, новият човек и актьорското тяло в тоталитарния театър.....	34
Венета Дойчева. Телесните ексцесии в театъра на Сара Кейн – възможни интерпретации.....	38
Ани Васева. Текст за театър или текст за танц.....	43
Ваня Петкова. Комичното и политиките на смеха в драматургията на Стратиев и нейните сценични реализации.....	47
Калина Терзийска. „Делириум“ – дивайзинг спектакъл по Достоевски.....	51

РЕЦЕНЗИИ

Ромео Попилиев. Васил Стефанов. „Пътят на режисурата“.....	57
Николай Йорданов. В търсене на театралността.....	58
Камелия Николова. Театрално предизвикателство: Сара Кейн на български език.....	60
РЕЗЮМЕТА.....	62

CONTENTS

Romeo Popiliev. The Resistance Against Georgi Markov's Resistance Plays.....	3
Kamelia Nikolova. An intensive dialogue: New British drama and Bulgarian theatre.....	10
Nikolay Iordanov. Choices and preferences. Foreign drama repertoire of Bulgarian theaters (1990-2012).....	21
Asen Terziev. Miss Julie in 2012 and the postmodern interpretation.....	27
Rumyana Nikolova. The Theatre and the Text of the Document.....	31
Joanna Spassova-Dikova. The Text, the New Man and the Actor's Body in Totalitarian Theatre.....	34
Veneta Doycheva. Excesses of the body in Sarah Kane's Theatre – Possible Interpretations.....	38
Ani Vasseva. Text about theatre or text about dance.....	43
Vanya Petkova. The comic and the politics of laughter in Stratiev's dramaturgy and its stage productions.....	47
Kalina Terziiska. „Delirium“ between Dostoevsky and Devising.....	51

REVIEWS

Romeo Popiliev. Vasil Stefanov. „The Road of the Stage Directing“.....	57
Nikolay Iordanov. In Search of Theatricality.....	58
Kamelia Nikolova. A Theatrical Challenge: Sarah Kane translated in Bulgarian.....	60
SUMMARIES.....	62



SUMMARIES

THE RESISTANCE AGAINST GEORGI MARKOV'S RESISTANCE PLAYS

Romeo Popiliev

The article examines some of the plays by novelist and playwright Georgi Markov (1929-1978) that are devoted to the topic of the armed resistance of the communists during the early 1940s: *To Crawl Under the Rainbow*, *Assassination in the Dead-end Street*, *Communist*, the first documentary drama ever written in our country, that was prohibited at the main rehearsal, and *Archangel Michael*, a play written in emigration, which, in its more abstract and generalized form, can also be classified in this thematic group. The first three dramas, written in Bulgaria, had a difficult staging history, and underwent various ordeals through various levels of censorship by the communist authorities; this history is amply reflected in the article. Before analyzing the texts themselves, the author attempts to situate the life and works of Georgi Markov within the general picture of those times. During the whole period from 1944 to 1989, the conflict between the Idealist and the Materialist may be considered one of the central oppositions expressed in Bulgarian art in general. This is true for G. Markov's plays as well. I designate these two functional characters of drama as the „Actionary” and the „Reactionary”. In three of these plays the topic is situated in a more or less abstract framework, and only in *Communists* is the theme presented with genuine historical concreteness. But it seems that abstractness on one side and realism on the other, especially in its documentary version, were the two great evils, the two most dangerous and impossible neighbours, of „socialist realism” – whatever that means.

AN INTENSIVE DIALOGUE: NEW BRITISH DRAMA AND BULGARIAN THEATRE

Kamelia Nikolova

New British drama is an important partner and active participant in the construction of theatre in Bulgaria after the politic change in the country in 1989. The texts for theatre written in the United Kingdom in the postmodern age i.e. from the end of the sixties of the last century till the present day turned out to be the most demanded foreign drama by Bulgarian companies in the last two decades. Almost unknown to the Bulgarian theatre before 1989 in the following years the new British drama is introduced in its show-bill with exceptional intensity and with symptomatic programme consistence – from Samuel Beckett through Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard and Caryl Churchill to Sarah Kane, Martin McDonagh and Conor McPherson.

The last two decades demonstrate essential changes in the dramaturgical text and in theatre performance and definitely in the relation between them. These changes have already started at the end of the 60s and the beginning of 70s of XX century and as a whole are a product of postmodern age. In the 90s of the last century and the first decade of the present century they reach their most distinctive and characteristic aspect. The mentioned changes are determining for the contemporary Bulgarian theatre where they receive additional characteristics from overall socio-cultural transformations in the country after the political turn in the end of 80s.

The article comments on these changes in maximum concrete focus – the reception of new British drama in Bulgaria after 1989. It follows and analyses the way in which contemporary plays from

the United Kingdom have been perceived by the teams that have staged them and the audience and it distinguishes the changes in the spectacle and the overall theatre situation, caused by the aesthetics of the chosen texts.

CHOICES AND PREFERENCES. FOREIGN DRAMA REPERTOIRE OF BULGARIAN THEATERS (1990-2012)

Nikolay Iordanov

The article treats the choices of the translated drama as cultural transfers trying to underline certain regularities in the show-bill of the Bulgarian theatre in the years between 1990 and 2012. The empirical picture of the preferred titles reveals that the flow of the dramatic texts after the political changes in the country returns to its Eurocentric orientation as it was the situation before the WWII.

Outside European classical and contemporary dramaturgy the predominant interests were (and still are) towards the Russian drama from the second half of 19th century – Gogol, Ostrovsky, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, and towards the 20th century American playwrights – Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Eduard Albee. There is a lack of enough curiosity towards new plays from East Europe and the Balkans, as well as from the other parts of the world – Asia, Africa, Latin America. The most influential authors for the theater practice proved to be Anton Chekov and Harold Pinter - both were rediscovered as dramaturgical samples and as carriers of absurdist theatricality. It was true especially for the last decade of the 20th century. While with the beginning of the new millennium came also the fascination to the present-day trans-

lated texts and the post-dramatic theatre forms.

MISS JULIE IN 2012 AND THE POSTMODERN INTERPRETATION

Asen Terziev

The text is a detailed review of the critically-acclaimed and successful theatre performance „Miss Julie” (directed and performed by Anna Pettersson), presented at the Intima Teater in Sweden. The production has been shown in Bulgaria in 2012 within the frameworks of Bulgaria’s two biggest international festivals – International Theatre Festival „Varna Summer” and „World Theatre in Sofia”. In this original staging of the classical modern play by August Strindberg, A. Pettersson plays all the roles and thus puts under question the ideas of power and authority in the text. She also employs video and live screening. Her scenic treatment of the text is a very good example of what the eminent French theoretician Patrice Pavis has termed „post-mise-en-scene” and has described as a typical trend for the theatre practices after the 1960s and connects it with the overcoming of the so-called “director’s theatre” of modernity. The sheer quality of Pettersson’s virtuoso acting goes beyond the traditional postmodern strategies of irony and deconstruction and opens up itself for the unresolved mysteries and riddles of the play.

THE THEATRE AND THE TEXT OF THE DOCUMENT

Rumiana Nikolova

The text deals with the problems of theatre historiography and its methodology. Some of the key concepts of theatre historical science are being described and presented (Thomas Postlewait, Christopher Balme, Robert Leach). How could we enforce methods and procedures of theatre historiography when examining Bulgarian theatre during the socialism?

The difficulties here are of different character and complexity. Indisputable is the hypothesis that this period of Bulgarian history can’t be understood on the level of events only. If the historical narrative remains on this level it will repeat once again the official historiography of the communist regime. If a research wants to get over this limitation, it needs to ask questions, to prove hypothesis and to put the facts within many discourses.

After having researched a great variety of documents, I came to the conclusion that we have to think about a more complex approach when examining socialist theatre. A historical methodology, which uses only the documents and their interpretation, does not work efficiently, because its text remains within the logic of the repressive state machine and the structures of the Bulgarian communist party that had coalesced with the state itself.

THE TEXT, THE NEW MAN AND THE ACTOR’S BODY IN TOTALITARIAN THEATRE

Joanna Spassova-Dikova

The proposed text, which is part of a larger study on totalitarian theatre, discusses the connection between the text, the new man and the actor’s body in theatre during the late Stalinism in Bulgaria (1948-1953 – the year of Stalin’s death).

In totalitarian state a very important role played theatre as far as with its specifics to keep a live link with the audience it was one of the crucial ways for imposing the totalitarian ideology. By acting the world of ideas and the material reality was bridged. The actor’s body as a „recording surface” became a broadly used device for visualization and dissemination of the official political strategies. On the stage the actors represented ideological schemes, prescribed in different normative party texts in the highly literature-centric totalitarian culture.

In the paper special attention is paid to the construction of the image of the working man, since he was the brightest embodiment of the new man in the performances of socialist party drama on the stage of the Bulgarian National theatre. Some of the images of the enemy figure are also put into account.

The survey is based on research and comparative analysis of critical reviews in the official periodicals: „Theatre”, „Labour Work”, „Literary Front”, „National Culture”, „National Youth”, „Evening News” and others, as well as of archival documents – transcripts of Arts Councils, interviews, diaries, memoirs, where rather contradictory information is given. The latter has to be reconsidered by theatre historians today.

EXCESSES OF THE BODY IN SARAH KANE’S THEATRE – POSSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS

Veneta Doycheva

This article deals with the interpretation of the body in the works of the British playwright Sarah Kane (1971-1999). The body is understood as the ultimate link between text and the stage. Filled with radical corporal gestures and images, Sarah Kane’s plays are often a true challenge to stage a as a theatre performance - a struggle to find adequate and true to the text solutions within the physical space of a theatre. The article uses as an example Kane’s *Blasted* by dissecting and analyzing the inherent layers of previous play-writing traditions (Ibsen, Brecht, Beckett). The interpretation of the body is discussed through the constant discursive interaction between the in-line dialogue and the stage directions on the page. The poetic strategies and the construction of the body within the text lead us to the notion of interpreting the corporal within the traditions of the sacrifice, the self-sacrifice and the Christian imagery.

TEXT ABOUT THEATRE OR TEXT ABOUT DANCE

Ani Vaseva

The article is focused on the conventional historical notions for theatre and dance and their relation to text. As central example is used the work of the British dancer and choreographer Jonathan Burrows and more specifically his duets, made in collaboration with the composer Matteo Fargion. In order to clarify the supposed contradictory character of the notion „contemporary dance” (and in relation to it, the uses of text in contemporary choreographic practice), the author re-discusses some theoretical aspects of the opposition between modern and contemporary art, respectively dance.

THE COMIC AND THE POLITICS OF LAUGHTER IN STRATIEV’S DRAMATURGY AND ITS STAGE PRODUCTIONS

Vanya Petkova

The current article examines the manifestation of the comic and the politics of laughter in Stratiev’s comedy and its stage productions.

How they relate to the formation of the allegorical layer which generates meanings that are subversive against ideological norms during socialism, is being analyzed. Also being followed is the development of this “subversive construct” in the performances after 1989. The hypothesis is that Aesopian language finds good grounds for development precisely in comedy due to the specifics of its genre. The generation of such „hidden” meanings adds extra value to comedy and comic, which, however, gradually fall out or are transformed in something qualitatively different after 1989. In support of these observations, examples have been provided from the play „The Roman Bath”, directed by Svetoslav Peev (2006), as well as the “The Roman Bath” of London’s theatre „Arcola” (2011).

„DELIRIUM” BETWEEN DOSTOEVSKY AND DEVISING

Kalina Terziiska

What is devising? Is it possible through devising to catch the spirit and energy of Dostoevsky’s greatest novel „The Brothers Karamazov” and to make an outrageously good

theatre show after it without Dostoevsky’s text in fact? How do British read Russian authors? Is democracy in the artistic process fruitful or problematic? Who is the author of a play created through devising – the playwright, the director or the actors? These are some of the questions raised in the article focused on the relations between text and creative process in making a contemporary theatre performance. It is based on Helen Freshwater’s observations on the devising process between Theatre O and the Irish playwright Enda Walsh after „The Brothers Karamazov” (1880) by Fyodor Dostoevsky and the reviews of their spectacle „Delirium” (2008). The text presents different stages and aspects of the collaborative creation of „Delirium” starting from the initial idea and passing through its development and transformation to its final realization. It pays special attention to the nature of the attitude of the creative team towards the source material, being a nineteenth century masterpiece, presenting contradictory viewpoints ranging from irony to admiration. The article also includes a short parallel between contemporary Bulgarian theatre practice and devising.