

01 BULLETIN 04 JUNIE

XXVI INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL VARNA SUMMER VIAFEST

1-11.06.2018

THE OPENING

01.06 Main Stage



For the 26th time the Varna Summer International Theater Festival was opened on the Main Stage of the Drama Theater in Varna. Tsvetana Maneva, artistic director of the festival, welcomed the audience and thanked the partners of the

event, while representatives of the main supporting institutions and the hosts wished the festival good luck. Deputy Minister of Culture Rumen Dimitrov read a welcome address from Minister Boil Banov, saying: "The Varna Summer International Theater Festival has gone a long way in its 26 years' history... Today, it is a benchmark for quality theatrical art and ensures the necessary dialogue of the national theater with the world cultural processes". Deputy Mayor of Varna Kosta Bazitov, on behalf of the mayor of the city Ivan Portnih, thanked the organizers and all guest artists for their appreciation of the spirit and of the cultural life and traditions of the city as well as the audience for making the festival really significant. Via Fest Foundation director Nikolay Iordanov said that at the end of 2017, the European Festival Association included the festival in a special selection of the 26 laureates of the European Festival quality label within the "Europe for festivals. Festivals for Europe" platform. The hosts Daniela Dimova, director of TMC - Varna, and Veselina Mihalkova, artistic director of Drama Theater - Varna, also wished good luck to the festival. We, too, wish you eventful festival days with the different magnitudes of the art of theatre!

BULGARIAN SELECTION | SHOWCASE

IN THE FIELD OF EMOTIONAL EMPATHY

GALIN STOEV, DIRECTOR

What is it like being a "theatrical nomad"?

To accept the feeling of instability that constantly accompanies you as normal. To realize that, however paradoxical it may sound, this is probably the only certain and lasting value you possess. Also, to try and formulate your identity, standing on the quicksand of the constant travel in space and time.

In 2002, Varna Summer Theater Festival supported the realization of your production "Archeology of Dreaming" based on the play "Dreams" by Ivan Vyrpaev and this was your first encounter with the Russian playwright. Is this producer function of a festival important, in your opinion? It is not only important, it is mandatory. This is an opportunity to do something you would probably never do in your regular work as a director. The problem is that our theater model has neither the structure, nor the logic that would allow such a production to exist properly. "Archeology of Dreaming" is probably one of my best works, which was literally destroyed by the existing regime and attitudes of the Bulgarian theater. Nobody wanted the production, nobody was interested in the production continuing its life after the festival and the few performances in Sofia. The work on the text, however, and my encounter with Ivan, played a crucial role in my subsequent professional choices, which is why I value this whole experience so much.

Plays by Ivan Vyrpaev form a large part of your biography as an artist. What makes you go back to them again and again?

True encounters in theater are something rare and therefore very valuable. Throughout all these years, Ivan managed to formulate with words what I felt instinctively, the reason why I ultimately continued to make theater. This relation deepened over time and, in a way, we grew together in our professions. It is good that we have managed to remain close.

You say that the play "Delhi Dance" reminds you at times of a "TV series, a sitcom". In the set design of the performance there is a screen on which a close-up of the faces of the actors is projected. How did you arrive at this concept and how does it change the audience's point of view?

This dispositif is something common on theater stages. In this sense, I do not believe that we have invented something new. I was more interested in offering the viewers the opportunity to choose for themselves how and what to watch at any given time, to emancipate them in a way from their sustainable viewing attitudes. I know this can be destabilizing, but it is much more interesting.

"Delhi Dance" is a play, imbued with philosophical questions about suffering, death, and the human inability to accept the unacceptable. What were the main difficulties you as a director faced when you transposed the text on the stage?

Maybe what we mean when we talk about "genre". The text itself is a strange mix of vaudeville and philosophical debate. But actually the field of emotional empathy born by this mixture is something else, something new and unexpected. The question is how we translate this into the language of

DELHI DANCE
Ivan Vazov
National Theatre

03/04.06 Main Stage

reality, so that all viewers can have the same perception code.

Since January, you have had the opportunity to work in a completely different role as director of the Toulouse National Theatre. Why did you choose to present to the French audience your production of "Delhi Dance" with actors from the Bulgarian National Theater?

I decided that this is probably the project that presents me most fully, but also with the greatest number of risks, before an audience who knew next to nothing about me. The project is based on a text by a contemporary playwright, who is probably one of the best known names today, exactly because he manages to produce deep and authentic experiences. The taste for contemporary playwrighting is another aspect, in which I recognize myself. And last but not least, it was important for me to show the culture and language I come from.

I DREAM OF WITNESSING SOMETHING AS FASCINATING AS THE DELHI DANCE

VLADIMIR KARMAZOV, ACTOR

"Delhi Dance" is the first production on which you work together with Galin Stoev. In what way was the process interesting and new for you?

The interesting part for me was the director, with whom I had never worked before, and the play by Ivan Vyrpaev. In the beginning, the text was an abstraction for me, but in the course of work it became one of the most important and wise texts that I had ever worked on. The topics it encompasses are of crucial importance and mirror things I reflect upon in my life. I discovered many answers as a person, I can even say that the text soothed me about many things.

During the play, the audience sees you simultaneously both on the stage and on a large screen – several cameras constantly follow everything that happens. Does that complicate your job as an actor?

Every performance of this production is a great and difficult acting experience and, above all, requires an immense amount of work. These cameras made it impossible for us to

>>> p.2

INTERNATIONAL SELECTION

THEATRE IN THE AIR

ANDREA AND LUCA PIALLINI, DIRECTORS AND PERFORMERS



01.06 Nezavisimost Sq.

WANTED
eVenti Verticali, Italy

How did you start your vertical theatre company "eVenti Verticali"?

L. P.: I was a theater actor in an open air theater company. In 2003, me and my brother Andrea were part of another theater company and then we started working on our own. He came with his acrobatic skills, me – with my acting skills and we merged these skills in our company "eVenti Verticali".

A. P.: I am a born acrobat. An acrobat with a great passion for the mountains! In my life I've been a juggler and worked for a circus company, but then in 2003 I started to deal more specifically with theater along with Luca. We founded "eVenti Verticali" in 2006 and so it combined all our passions!

What was your main inspiration for this kind of vertical theatre shows? How did you come up with the idea for the show "Wanted"?

L. P.: We've always wanted to be able to unite our two loves – climbing and theatre. There had been some occasional attempts before, but it all took shape in 2003 when we found ourselves working in a show in Gdansk. The desire to experiment with the wall of a building not as a scenography but as a vertical stage led us to do a theatrical improvisation on it while hanging and it left the audience open-mouthed!

A. P.: While experimenting together, we started impersonating characters and telling a story. Soon we realized that we were doing something new, we were doing vertical theater. Enthusiastic about this discovery, we decided to dedicate all our attention to it.

The vertical theatre brings together so many different art forms such as theatre, dance, acrobatics, circus, graphics, music... How do you deal with all of them at once?

L. P.: For us it's important that the audience sees us as performers (the one is more of an actor, the other one is more of an acrobat). And then the various collaborations with musicians, videomakers, designers, painters, circus artists, comedians... Everything has melted over time.

How important is the concept for the plot in your shows or the spectacularity and new technologies have a leading role?

L. P.: In our shows we try to keep a balance with all the forces that come into play: music, video, physicality... In "Wanted" the challenge was to "compete" with the power of the video, for the actor must remain a protagonist! If we succeeded, you should tell us!

Do you think vertical theatre has the potential to develop new forms in every art field that you are using?

L. P.: The idea of "Wanted" was born while working with a musician, who (initially without video) followed our movements "live". So yes, somehow it was the music that developed to follow us, just as it was for the designer who created the videoscenographies. And if it is true that there is no limit to creativity, certainly there will be no limit to the development of the forms of art that will play in favor of vertical theater, we'll see!

Siana Nedyalkova worked on the material.



BULGARIAN SELECTION | SHOWCASE

MORE THAN NEEDED

JAVOR GARDEV, DIRECTOR



What provoked you to bring life to the novel "Chamkoria" by Milen Ruskov on the theatre stage?

I do not even know ... Some kind of gale came out from the inside, grabbed me and did not leave me alone. And the work process was as smooth as silk.

You and Zahari Baharov worked on the text for a long time and chose together which episodes to be included in the stage adaptation. Did you have to make a lot of changes when the rehearsals started on stage?

No, not even one. Just minor additions, minute reductions, and moving some sentence forward or backward into the text.

Which of Bae Slave's features did you focus on when creating his character on the stage?

His life-sustaining element.

The novel is extremely specific in the outline of geographical trajectories. How important was this accuracy for the stage space for you?

There are two trajectories that had to be outlined on the stage. These are the trajectories of the yellow bag and the cigarette case. These objects are present on stage according to the covenant Chekhov rule. Their migration through the scenery is the only obligatory mise en scene. Once he has carried the bag and the cigarette case to their destinations, our character is relieved of any other mise en scene obligations.

In an interview you say that "Bae Slave will not be a fleeting image in the Bulgarian consciousness". Is such a literary character needed in our time?

He is more than needed. He is coveted.

Siana Nedyalkova worked on the material.

THE SELECTORS

THE DIFFERENT FACE OF THEATER TODAY

NIKOLAY IORDANOV AND ASEN TERZIEV, VIA FEST FOUNDATION

It seems that this year there is an unusual big number of productions in the Bulgarian selection of the festival's main program. Is it a sign of a successful season?

N.I.: It is, by all means, a sign that there are sufficient titles that we think are worthy of being presented during the festival. The selection reviews the past season and yes, probably this year there are more productions that we find successful from the point of view of the festival.

A.T.: The number of productions in the selection is not much larger compared to previous years. However, some of the productions are programmed both in the Bulgarian Selection module, and in Showcase, which is oriented towards more professional audiences, while the general program as such remains the most important thing for the spectators.

What was your main motivation in doing the international selection?

A.T.: In the first place, the main motivation always is the high artistic quality. Secondly, we look at the genre diversity and the objective to present in Bulgaria works that cannot usually be seen and that would stimulate the development of the language of theater in this country. We choose titles that we believe will resonate in some way here.

N.I.: Also there are some lines that we follow over the years – for example, to show Bulgarian theatre makers who are based abroad. This year Christian Bakalov joins the interna-

tional program following this very logic. Of course, we also continue initiatives which we started before, such as NT Live, Metropolitan Opera Live, which we present together with the Varna Summer International Music Festival. Actually, we already found a nice name for our collaboration – the Intermezzo Program. We have had joint initiatives for the last 2-3 years and it will be good to shape this into a separate module, also with international participation.

You mentioned your cooperation with the Music Festival, you are strengthening your relations.

N.I.: Yes, we are very serious about this cooperation. We hope it will continue to grow in the future. Because this presupposes that we will continue to join resources and ideas and, most of all, to fill a comparatively empty niche between the end of the Theater Festival and the beginning of the Music Festival.

The topic of the professional discussion this year is „Do festivals Reshape the Theater Landscape?“. What is your opinion and how would you answer this question from the point of view of Varna Summer Festival?

A.T.: The answer certainly cannot be categorical and unequivocal, but the impact of festivals is undoubted. This is gaining more and more recognition in Bulgaria in the past few years. In evidence of this is the establishment of a Bulgarian Festival Association and the emergence of more and more new festival varieties. Basically, because it presents things outside their normal context, the festival adds value and enriches the language of the respective art. We have spoken with some of our colleagues and partners from the largest festival on the Balkans BITEF, who have shared one of

the strangest paradoxes that in Belgrade they have had the opportunity to watch on stage some of the most interesting and innovative names in the world theater at a time when that was impossible for us in this country. At the same time, however, the repertory stage has not changed significantly because of this. But at least the festival's popularity increased greatly, which is positive proof that although we don't always see directly the change in the aesthetic and artistic attitudes, nevertheless the very necessity to talk, to visit, shows that things are changing. The audience is changing and this is very important.

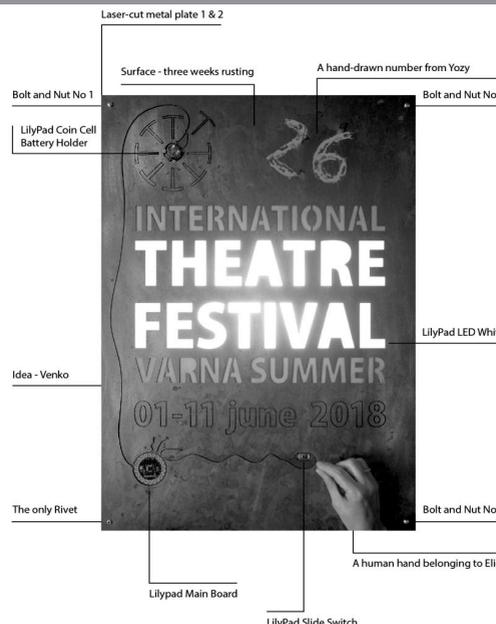
N.I.: The topic is a provocation. It is clear that festivals reshape the theater landscape, but how exactly? In connection with this, on June 8, there will be a round table with theater critics and journalists discussing how today's theater is changing. This is the main topic this year, evident in the selection, the motto, and the discussions which are organized. As for festivals, I think that they now have a different logic from the theater that lives its routine daily life. And I am not just saying this because they inherently have a different time/space and energies. It is clear that festivals are an essence of all this and they start forming different artistic logics. In particular, I would focus on the Bulgarian situation. The theater system here is such that it encourages the theater's quick success with audiences, but this deprives them, in a way, from opportunities to search, to enrich their artistic expression, language and means. While festivals remain the only place where the various productions created within the system and those invited from abroad show a different path for development and this seems to me to be very important for the entire context.

Natalia Alexieva worked on the material.

THE FESTIVAL IMAGE

THE FESTIVAL AS AN ACTIVE SYSTEM-SITUATION

For seven years now, the stage designer and visual artist Venelin Shurelov has been creating the poster image of the Varna Summer International Theatre Festival. This image seldom remains fixed only on the festival poster, but becomes a kind of installation as well. This is true also about this year's image. Here is the account of the author himself: "It often happens that everything starts with something I have recently tried out in my author's projects or, as is the case with this year's image, with something I would like to try out for the first time. The poster this year conveys the feeling of a theatrical relic, a fossil from the future, an active system-situation. There are more projections on the apparently two-dimensional surface, made up of laser engraved metal, patina, paint, light, microelectronics, human hand. The human hand in the frame is just another surface, another probability, another presence, part of the instrumentation. It is not there to dominate, but to facilitate. The theatre audience will be able to discover perhaps some cross links between the visual solution and this year's selection. In my opinion, however, this is not necessary and I myself would not look for such abstract generalizations. The poster is one of the performances in the program and that's it".



>>> p.1

play the emotional states technically. Cameras, as a strict gauge of authenticity, are there and they film close-ups of our faces. You cannot lie. On the large stage this is generally possible because of its scale and because we actors are small figures on it. People cannot see the faces in detail. But here everything is visible, and to make matters worse, we have only one take (unlike in the cinema). To make all of this real, you need very serious concentration.

Have you ever felt like your character Andrey – so inexplicably struck by the "Delhi dance"?

No, but I dream of witnessing something so fascinating as that dance, for it to turn my life upside down, provide me

with answers, to fix me and show me that pain and horror do not exist, that only beauty exists.

What was the main challenge for you in this production and the work on your character?

Handling the topic of death. And mostly, how to achieve these emotional states every time, from the first attempt and at every performance. This is the hardest thing I have ever done in the theater. Thanks to this role, I learned new things about myself as an actor and conquered new territories.

Siana Nedyalkova worked on the material.

FESTIVAL FORUM

VARNA – FESTIVAL CITY

DEISLAVA GEORGIEVA, HEAD OF FESTIVALS AND PROJECTS DEPARTMENT, VARNA MUNICIPALITY

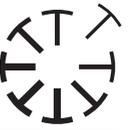
What do you think is the positive development that the Varna Summer International Theater Festival brings to the city?

The festival is a concentration of a quality cultural product that has been carefully thought-out, there are logical connections and messages, aimed at all kinds of interests of people and especially of young people. It is partnering with the next big festival in Varna's cultural calendar - the Varna Summer Music Festival which will have its 92nd edition this June and together the two festivals develop the Intermezzo Program. We created this program with the desire to make a lasting connection between the two festivals to shape the brand "Varna - Festival City". It encompasses the theater and music festival, the Varna Summer Ballet Competition, as well as the jazz and folklore festivals, i.e. all international festivals in the city. The theater and music festivals started the cooperation between them. When there is such collaboration, there is much more room for sharing resources, for project exchange. I can give an example - sometimes in the music festival we need a multi-genre spectacle that includes dance and visual arts. The colleagues at the theatre festival know best where to find a good offer. The Flamenco performance "Desplante" last year was widely acclaimed. I think that this year the same thing will happen with the concert of the Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices and Lisa Gerrard.

In what direction do you wish to develop the festivals in Varna?

I would like to reach the level of a festival city like Edinburgh. We are very close to making a network of festivals in Varna and being that successful.

Elena Angelova worked on the material.



SHOWCASE

"FLAPSE" AS TIME TRAVEL

JIVKO JELYAZKOV, CHOREOGRAPHER

Could you tell us more about your work process on "FLAPSE"? Its aesthetic is reminiscent of the aesthetic of the butoh dance. Was that an intentional reference?

As with most of my projects, with "FLAPSE" the work process started as a kind of a research. We discussed at length the topic of the play and major elements in creating the overall concept. Thus we came to the conclusion that what we are interested in here is reaching a different state, where thought is as free as possible. We sought different strategies for eliminating all perceptions of time and visual orientation in space and entering a dreamlike state. Approximating the aesthetic of the butoh dance was not a deliberate intention.

In "FLAPSE", the body of the performer seems to cross the border of the „living" and is present as a sculpture, as an installation. What provoked this choreographic approach?

Yes, in "FLAPSE" the body does seem to cross the border of the „living". Gravitation is constantly being mastered, and the contact with the other body makes it possible to achieve positions that eliminate all hypotheses where and how it is located.

In different interviews, you tell the stories of the title "FLAPSE", which is a combination of the English words flaps (waving of wings) and lapse (air flow). It is like a collage for a specific flight in the memory, which the dancers perform within themselves, with their eyes closed. Could you please enlarge on the particular quality and state? How did you work with the dancers to distill it?

Yes, "FLAPSE" is a flight of thought, a travel in time, a meeting with memories and an escape from them, and the movement is mostly a result of an internal process. For that reason, it was important to ignore the external factors as much as possible, so that there are no prerequisites for reaction. Rehearsals were insulated from noise and daylight. We used a minimalist audio environment, which does not engage the artists' consciousness, but, on the contrary – frees it and redirects the focus from the external environ-

FLAPSE
Derida Company

04.06 Art Gallery

ment to the internal world, where a new reality can be validated.

Tell us more about the collaboration with Ivan Shopov in this particular project. What was leading in creating the audio environment for the performance?

Ivan Shopov and I manage to develop our communication

with less words and more feeling for and in the process. It is a two-way provocation. On the one hand, the ideas for the audio environment are based on what is happening, which Ivan observes, and on the other – the acoustic elements that he suggests set new directions in the performance.

Elena Angelova worked on the material.

WE BECOME ONE WITH THE AUDIENCE

MARIY ROSEN (DIRECTOR), ANA VALCHANOVA (PERFORMER), PETYA BOYUKOVA (SET DESIGN), KONSTANTIN TIMOSHENKO (COMPOSER) IN CONVERSATION



"The Happy Beckett" relies on special questionnaires, which the audience fills in advance, allowing everyone to participate personally in the show and above all to co-create it.

M. Rosen: Yes, we've come up with a very complicated scheme for the show. In fact, we expect the interaction with the spectators to be done in advance, while we simply process it. Thus, the performance is interactive in another way. It makes spectators actually hear their own text and watch it being interpreted. It's a two-edged sword. However, it has proven to be quite difficult to get the audience to trust you in advance.

What has provoked this concept?

M. Rosen: I have always wanted to stage Samuel Beckett's "Happy Days", but I've had a more open attitude to the play. I was in a situation where I could not afford to use a text that is much liked because I would break the restrictive approach to it. That is, the director has to keep up with everything Beckett has written. I had a slightly bolder approach in my interpretation. In fact, my desire to remain faithful to the text and not use Beckett's text has led me to the idea that it is possible to give up the whole play and otherwise accumulate texts. Naturally, my first thought was to involve the audience in this.

Did you use joint effort to think up the questions?

M. Rosen: Ana and I started to develop this concept from a very distant point of view. For a long time, my work with her was not exactly on the "director-actor" level, but quite another.

A. Valchanova: From the very beginning, Mariy had a clear concept and idea, with a great number of reference points. From there on, we worked together, designing the whole performance: links, themes, and how to arrange them together. Coming up with the questions took us a long time because we had to word them so that we get something close to what we wanted to achieve as a result.

Yeah, really, when you start filling in the questionnaire, you are already in the show and it sets you in the mood and you get even more interested. And at what point did the visual environment, music and space organization come into the workflow?

P. Boyukova: The visual environment has been involved since the early design of the whole structure. Then, Konstantin and I were the first to answer the questions. Until then, Mariy and Ana had not shared anything with us and had kept us in absolute ignorance so that we could be in the audience's position. And from there on we started to work, of course, with many changes happening along the way. Even after the first show, we continued to make changes.

K. Timoshenko: The music evolved in parallel to the growth of the show. The lengths of musical compositions depend on the text that the audience provides us with, so certain musical pieces must be constantly extended or shortened. We decided to include some live performances as well as musical instruments on stage. I take care not only of the music but also of the sound design.

M. Rosen: Petya and Konstantin have become very accomplished singers and from time to time they are also characters in the play saying some lines. A small Bulgakov-type company was formed made up of strange people, strange beings. This may be moving away from Beckett, but in the end we do not just stick to his text, but mostly to the structure to which we are very loyal.

Was Beckett the only provocation for the creation of this performance?

M. Rosen: Beckett alone. Everything originates from the fabric of the play as images, signs, thought and structure. However, the characters that Petya, Konstantin and I play have been added, so maybe in this part of the show we have used not only Beckett's imagery.

Ana, what was the main challenge for you, apart from having a whole new text for each show?

A. Valchanova: The challenge was immense, starting from the fact that I was involved as co-author. I don't think this would happen to me again. Another challenge is that this is a kind of solo performance, and I have slight prejudices about this genre, even as a spectator. I still have the feeling that you are deprived of a conflict without the presence of another figure on the stage.

M. Rosen: This is a mono quartet. When the action becomes boring, we move in and somehow help the show.

A. Valchanova: The third challenge is to change the texts each time. On the one hand, it seems difficult, but on the other it is easier because I do not have to memorize texts. However, when I do not know the text and I'm waiting for it, anything can happen. I feel the audience being actively involved in the process and how we become one. Such a thing happens very rarely. And because spectators have provided us with their texts and there is a general awareness that we are telling a story to someone who may be a person next to you, people are beginning to feel closer to each other, and that is really exciting.

There are people who react to their own stories and thus give themselves away.

A. Valchanova: Sometimes we have amazing texts, not only as a story but also as a way of telling. What real life can offer is difficult for a playwright to repeat. There are so many beautiful stories, even in their tragedy.

Albena Tagareva and Siana Nedyalkova worked on the material.



BULGARIAN SELECTION

YOU NEED TO GO BEYOND YOURSELF IN ORDER TO DO GOOD

MARGARITA MLADENOVA, DIRECTOR



How did you choose the novels "Demons" and "Idiot" for the new program of Sfumato dedicated on Dostoyevsky's work?

We are greatly concerned about what is happening to man - how the human space is diminishing, how the so-called society has a one-dimensional perspective to man. Today, aggression and destruction are becoming a tacit rule of life. This trivializes creation, it erases it as an impulse to make sense of our lives on earth. That's why the program is entitled, "Expelling the Demons". It examines rage, destructive energy, destruction within man, and shows what stands at the other end, where the only chance lies, which is the only gesture with which the man of today and tomorrow can resist destruction. At this other end is Mishkin's gesture, which is in keeping with what Christ says in his teachings: "If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also." Is there salvation for man? Yes, there is! It is in the

person himself. If, in spite of the context, despite all the force of evil, despite the rage, man succeeds in turning this impulse into action. It is important for people who are going to watch and read, to know that Dostoyevsky writes "Idiot" and "Demons" at the same time. He makes one version of "Idiot", which he destroys, then he writes it from the beginning, and when he submits the novel for publication, he writes in his diary (paraphrase): "I'm sorry, I could not get this novel, that text that I care so much about, right." The very idea and the experience itself are so impossible. There is a much diminished and neglected notion of good today. For us to do good is to do good beyond what you have when it does not hurt you, when it does not cost you anything. Doing good requires you to give up many things, to risk, the good wants you to go beyond yourself to do it. These are completely different values, other pillars of the meaning of man, of which Dostoyevsky reminds us. And we remember them through him and we hope that they can be restored in man. That is why we can not do without Dostoyevsky today.

How did you work with the novel?

I tried to follow Mishkin's perception of what was happening to him. He sees in man beyond what is visible. He looks at Nastasya and says, "I hope to God she is good. If she is good, everything will be saved." And because she is not good, the battle for her salvation starts. This perspective, this empathy with the other person provokes him. Dostoyevsky makes some special publicity of the intimate. There is not a literally intimate scene. This determined our poetics. What we do is a kind of a high-brow street theater. That's where the stories come from, and the people telling these stories, the narrative. There lies the edge between Dostoyevsky and the brechtia on Dostoyevsky that happens before our eyes on

the stage. I can not imagine retelling the plots between four walls. This is not a performance that is meant to appeal to everyone. It is thought to meet a person who needs it.

You work with young actors - how did their encounter with Dostoyevsky happen? What is the process that you went through?

In both "Idiot" and "Demons", Ivan Dobchev and I made a deliberate decision to recruit very young actors. We took a risk in the most real sense of the word. We wanted to start with them, and through them, we could go this way in thinking as if for the first time. The way that has been gone must remain in man, to resonate, to continue its work within us. We rehearsed for a really long time. There were many evenings when we gathered separately, afternoons, mornings, whenever the actors were free. The whole effort was not so much to grasp what it was about, but to lay it on ourselves and to awaken in our nature an impulse like the one the characters had. Long and difficult was the way of non-acting in the acting. The acting is not very complicated, but the non-acting in the acting takes a lot of time and effort, and I am extremely satisfied with it. Mishkin is the positive image, the wonderfully positive man - it sounds sinister. This threatens also the director, the actors, and the whole performance to be reduced to pseudo-literature and didactics. To challenge, to awaken a spiritual impulse that is authentic, and then to aim for it, to integrate it in poetry - that is the philosophy of Sfumato, our whole poetics, all our methodologies and beliefs. It is difficult today to cause this to happen, but it is possible. It's just possible.

Lyubomir Parushev worked on the material.

THE DEMONS HIDDEN IN EVERY ONE OF US

IVAN DOBACHEV, DIRECTOR

15 years after "Death Shadow Valley" you continue the exploration of Dostoyevsky's world. Back then your focus was on the "Brothers Karamazov". Why have you decided to feature "Demons" in the new "Expelling the Demons" program?

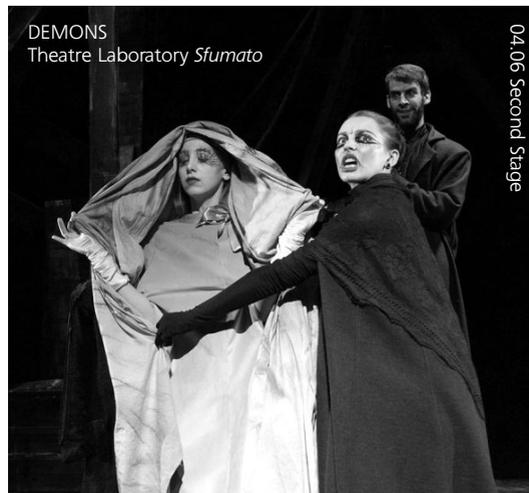
The program is not accidentally called "Expelling the Demons". The demons, the rage that possesses the person or the demon that is lurking somewhere, suppressed under a seeming intelligence, is something that nowadays is becoming more and more manifest, coming to the surface. This is beginning to control people, to make them ugly. This is Dostoyevsky's big topic in the novel "Demons" - to scan, to see the person, to see his manifestations, and to try to give some recipe about how to help a person get out of them and not succumb to them. Otherwise, the danger is to end up like Stavrogin did.

So that is why you focus on Stavrogin and the "cut-off" chapter "By Tichon" and you leave out the whole socio-political layer that finds expression in characters such as Piotr Verhovenski, Stepan Trofimovich ...

Yes. Dostoyevsky himself says that this character emerged later on in the process of writing the novel. It was really begun as a political novel about a student's murder, and later on, Stavrogin appeared. About him, Dostoyevsky says that he pulled him out of his heart. That impressed me very much, because we can recognize much of the author himself in this character. Not in the sense of the literal evidence that he had an incest with a little girl, but rather in the suggestion that there is such a drive within man, such rage, such impulses that make man abuse, defile, reject God, neglect the most frightening commandment - those who abuse a child will never reach the kingdom of heaven.

The production impresses with its imagery. The scenes pass like shadowy dreams in the consciousness of Stavrogin in a stretched moment locked between the soaping of the gallows rope, a moment before it came to his neck, and the hanging itself. He seems to relive these moments again, but he also looks at them from aside and realizes what he has done ...

Yes, that is true. At the end of the novel, it is firmly established by all those who then deal with this suicide that he did it in full consciousness, that it was not a deed of a person who was drunk or neurotic. He did it very pragmatically - from the soap bar to the special rope. This gesture is



associatively related with Matryosha's suicide. I thought that the moment he did it, the whole path that brought him to the rope passed through him. Of course, the play changes, evolves. In my last version, while he is holding the rope at the beginning as if in his sleep, Matryosha appears. This is the final decision which I think is the most true. He hears her song, sees how she goes to suicide, and from there everything comes back. The purely political, social side remains really like a refrain representing the context. Stavrogin knows he has a problem with his own identity, with his own self. He has to fix himself so that he can start fixing the world.

For the role of Stavrogin you chose Boris Krastev, who is actually a director. Does this contribute in any way to building the character?

It seems to me that this is the most organic choice, because the nature of the director's profession is to be inside with others, at the same time being slightly alienated. For me it seemed important that the actor who plays Stavrogin, have the thinking of a director. Everyone else in some way participates in his play, in the play of his life, in the plot of his life. And in some way he allows them to do something, but not everything - he is not fully honest with them, not fully frank. He somehow plays a role - the role of a director, a leader.

Natalia Alexieva worked on the material

PARALLEL PROGRAM



Eric Perrotel, Institut Francais de Bulgarie - Antenne de Varna, opens the presentation of short plays staged and performed by pupils of bilingual High schools in Bulgaria, following the 25th International School Festival of Francophone Theatre of Stara Zagora 2018.

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