

Summary – kød

After two months of vacations the new theatre season 2009/2010 is open. The end of June and the summer customerily belonged to the home and foreign theatre festivals. We bring further information in September issue of kød.

Not a few Slovak theatre artists work abroad. What their beginnings were, what cultural and artistic divergences they feel, how they are accepted by the outland, how different they feel to be – those are the core themes to focus in the future issues of our monthly. The first questioned Slovak theatre artists working abroad were Mr. and Mrs. Erby, who have lived in Munich, Germany for several years, where they managed to link to Slovak background and to start their own theatre not only for children – The Erby Theater. „Róbert: We found ourselves in a specific situation, as the theatre for children in Munich is not subsidized. When we applied for money in Slovakia, we were told to apply for it in Germany; maybe they thought that we earn a lot abroad. There is no chance for us on both sides. We aren't at home anymore there and we are not yet at home here. (...) We can say that we resigned to apply for grants. As we earn some other way than by theatre, we have less time and the preparations of premieres are time-consuming.

Zuzana: On the other hand we are proud to have this independence. And that we still can do theatre.“

Those who didn't see the premiere of Medea in The State Theatre of Košice, they had the opportunity to see it at the Dotyky a spojenia festival. It is always a unique event to see an antique play in the repertory of Slovak theatres. It was that case also in the event of Euripides' Medea directed by Michal Vajdička. The name of Jana Hanzelová's review Summons for Medea suggests the director's aims and his approach. „Michal Vajdička let this decision on „the authorities“ and he brings the antique heroine Medea to justice. Apart from the first restraint concerning the already mentioned interpretation of the main heroine, it is not easy for the creative team of this text to overcome the layers of antique pathos. However, its total elimination might cause the effect of forced actualisation, which would eventually function rather disconcertingly than creatively.“

The Cherry Orchard in DAB Nitra directed by Svetozár Sprušanský will certainly appear amongst the nominees for DOSKY 2009 Awards. This production impressed by acting and actual rendition supported to a certain degree by a director's new translation. Dana Silbiger's review Orchard of Rosy Memories and Cherry Reality analyses in detail director's conception: „If we judged him by the spaces in which Sprušanský's Chekhov appeared, we would get an impression that the rebel became a settled man. But it is not so. This director and dramaturg whose scope of life is in searching for and asking uncomfortable questions in more or less provoking style of staging, among others by demands to unconventional radical visual form of his productions, he didn't choose the stage as the cession of commonness. Behind a transparent drape, three white walls are hidden, built from connected polystyrene boards, forging a big open box, a hall, mansion of Ranevskaya, her family and household. (...) “

The first prize for dramatic text on Alfred Radok Award went to Vladislava Fekete, the director of Theatre Institute. Soon after the announcement of the results, her piece Krátke spojenia (Short Connections) has been staged in South Bohemian Theatre in České Budějovice. We learn more about the production in the review About Emigration, Communication and Solitude written by teatrologue Ján Jaborník: „The piece Krátke spojenia staged in South Bohemian Theatre the guest director Petr Štindl. He trusted its qualities and he took advantage of them and developed them by well-thoughtout approach. Foremost he inserted author's literally valuable, characterisingly functional and systematically composed blocking.“

Roman Sikora and Petr Christov, two Czech theatre critics contributed reviews on the festival of contemporary Slovak and foreign drama Nová dráma/New Drama 2009. Both views agree on the fact, that the 5th anniversary year was noted from the aspect of presented contemporary productions for its standard and noninvention which is not a problem of the programme structure, but of the productions and their directors' approaches. Roman Sikora: „Luckily, there weren't many performances and it was possible to agree even with the jury's decision on the main awards for the production Mobil of City Theatre of Žilina and for Petržalka Stories of Studio 12 from Bratislava. They were the only performances about which it is possible to affirm that

although they didn't bring anything breathtaking, at least they didn't become unbearable and in many things they even gratified.“

Petr Christov: „The only connection in the selection of all Slovak productions became the fact, that they tried to put up with different ways of contemporary writing for theatre and that they are actual productions premiered generally in the current season. It is natural that the selection of possible Slovak theatre representants is rather limited and that each year is essentially dependent on the instantaneous productions of Slovak theatres.“

Dotyky a spojenia is the regular festival of Slovak theatres held by the end of June in Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin. Dária Fehérová rates this year: „Organisers of the festival took this year edition by the storm and they changed almost everything from the ground to the top. The reasons of these changes can be found anywhere, but the starter was certainly recently reopened National House. Marble and soft seats were for the audience an agreeable alternative to the austere sitting in the Studio, not only from the aspect of comfort.“

In June, the friends of puppet theatre took pleasure of two festivals – Puppet Žilina and Neighbour Is The Closest Family held in Bratislava. Lenka Džadíková compares in her review the pros and cons of both festivals. She tends unambiguously to the newbie from Žilina. „After the successful zeroth year of the pleasant festival which is the bilance of the puppet season in Slovakia, The Puppet Theatre of Žilina prepared the first year with the same amount of positive energy and professionalism. The good from the previous year was preserved – a friendly festival atmosphere and its organizationally flawless run.“

Stanica-Zárečie in Žilina sweetened the summer with festival of Slovak independent theatre and dance KIOSK. Milan Zvada compares it to a delicacy: „As the taste has no limits, mostly in contemporary art, this year's KIOSK was a test of courage not only for the audience, but also for the artists who coped during their performance with the stuffy alternative new building of Stanica Žilina-Zárečie officially called S2.“

Wiener Festwochen is one of the most visited foreign festivals by Slovak theatre artists. The reasons are different. On the one hand the distance between Bratislava and Vienna is almost insignificant, on the other it proposes every June the best of the world theatre scene. While Anna Grusková zooms in this year's selection in her text *Poses, Awes, Cry and Fear*, where she follows several productions, theatre critic Martina Vannayová focuses on Warlikowski's excellent production *(A)pollonia* in her text *God Is Dead More and More*.

No less interesting view of festivals is the article *There is No Third Way of* theatrologist Soňa Šimková about this year's Avignon Festival: „The centerpiece of the programme was undoubtedly megaproduction *Blood of Promises (Le Sang des promesses)* by Wajdi Mouwad himself, presented on the honours courtyard of the Palais des Papes, the principal stage of the festival. As it last 11 hours, it immediately came into history as only the second production of the same length from the history of the Avignon Festival. In 1987 it was Antoine Vitez who took care of the all-night experience with his integral execution of Claudel's *The Satin Slipper*.“

Currentness With the Smell of Humanity is the title of the article of theatrologist Nadežda Lindovská about the 19th international theatre festival *Kontakt-Torun*, where remarkable contemporary theatre artists appeared.

„On the *Kontakt'09* Festival thirteen productions from nine European countries were presented and large majority of them tended to the mission of humanity, to the understanding of contradiction of human desires and passions. In the present context the fact that the award for the best female performance went to a young Dutch actress Halina Reijn for her interpretation in Cocteau's monodrama *The Human Voice (Toneelgroep Amsterdam, director Ivo van Hove)* was symbolical. The *Torun* festival sounded not only by this piece, but by all its program in diverse voices of mankind sonant in different keys of today.“

The September issue of *kød* is terminated by a new section *Me and Theatre* in which you find up to date information about what theatre artists are preparing, what they are living through and what they are thinking about. This time we spoke to stage designer Marija Havran and actress Edita Borsová.

In regular annexe dekøder, apart from the information from festivals, workshops and residencies, you will find a shortened version of The Critical Platform – specialist discussions at Dotyky a spojenia festival. The transcription captures first three days, the rest can be found in the next October issue.