

Justinas Kalinauskas

Department of Theatre Studies, Faculty of Arts, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas

The change in the relationship between theatre and reality in the context of Lithuanian theatre

In my research I concentrate in structuring the phenomena of theatrical reality and analysing the changes in theatre subject's relationship in the XXIst century Lithuanian theatre. In the period between early 2000s and present day, still inert Lithuanian theatre field discovered staging practises and performative concepts, which were developed in the West over several decades of the second half of the XXth century. Because theatre field in the country had been isolated for the subsequent decades after WWII and had perfected conventional theatre mechanisms (both in production and in spectatorship), new theatrical ideas are hard to fully implement and thus have trouble being presented to the audience. The key goal of the research is to examine how the social mechanics of theatre operate in different staging conditions and develop a structural methodological model for the analysis of colliding theatrical and social realities in conventional and contemporary approaches to theatre. In the forum I would like to address the models of representation in Lithuanian theatre between 2008 and 2018 and define few critical changes that occurred during the period. During the past decade some aspects of contemporary theatre were employed by many more theatre creatives, especially by the younger generation of actors and directors. However, these new practises not always could be fully implemented into the existing fabric of theatre tradition. Unique to post-soviet countries of the Baltic states was the absence of formally accepted new theatre paradigm of the 60s and 70s up until late 90s and early 00s, which was determined by socio-political factors and repressive mechanisms in the creative field in the former USSR. Even in the present-day Lithuanian theatre field, performative approaches could be described as conditional and reserved, still relying on conventional past structures of *play-director-actor-representation*. One of the premises is that changes in spectators' habitude cannot catch up with newly (re)introduced theatre practises of the XXIst century and still resembles conventional observation tactics, rather than interactive ones, thus preventing principal changes in staging strategies as well.

Analysing the processes of the XXIst century Lithuanian theatre demonstrates conflicting relations between the spectators and the theatre community when incorporating contemporary

approaches. One of the key problems is associated with interactivity and participation practises of spectator, which are being implemented with different levels of success. Another problematic aspect is the involvement of the actor himself in direct participation with a spectator, which often contradicts representational aspect of acting. Big part of my research is an empirical study of theatre mechanics and actor-audience interactions, which I approach using Practise based Research (PbR) method. In the practical field I apply my expertise as MA in Stage directing and as a practitioner of contemporary performative theatre myself. Phenomenon of reality and its manifestation in the microcosmos of theatre is an abstract sub-topic in academic discourse and suffers from the lack of methodological tools and practical approaches, as well as lack of empirical data. Most of the former studies in the field is limited to examining theatrical practises of representing reality but doesn't analyse how social processes operate during the performance itself. Because contemporary experiments in Lithuanian theatre field is a young practise, comparing them with more varied examples from neighbouring countries will help to expand understanding how spectators and actors interact together.