

SUMMARIES JUNE 2007

Opening Column

URMAS VADI

As the theatre section of the current issue is largely dedicated to radio theatre, the young radio director Urmas Vadi reflects on the status of radio theatre and its role in today's society where the great number of media channels enables numerous choices; he also wonders whether it has any advantages that prevent it from being merely „a poor man's theatre”.

Replies

TOOMAS LÕHMUSTE

Actor and director Toomas Lõhmuste talks about his road to theatre, work as an actor, director and teacher, and about productions treating the relations between Estonians and Russians produced together with Merle Karusoo; also about his current job as head of the Radio Theatre.

Persona grata

MIKK MURDVEE

Mikk Murdvee is a diverse musician who has stood out recently as a brilliant violinist and more recently as a conductor. He has conducted the Sibelius Academy symphony orchestra, Oulu, Lappeenranta and Seinajoe town orchestras, Pori Sinfonietta, Uusinta Chamber Ensemble, Estonian National Symphony Orchestra and the symphony orchestra of the Finnish Radio (two latter in the master class of J. Panula and L. Segerstam). He has also been a theatre conductor in Tampere, Oulu and in spring 2007 he debuted as conductor at the performance of Bournonville's *La Sylphide* at the National Opera Theatre Estonia.

THEATRE

MADIS KOLK. *Via Alienation to Closeness to Life*

Overview of the work and general trends of the Radio Theatre during the last season, trying to find an answer to the question why radio theatre has been practically forgotten by the critics although the number of its audience exceeds that of „ordinary” theatre.

ARNE MERILAI. *The Idea of Scenography*

The author analyses Jussi Kylätasku's radio play *Stove*, directed by Taago Tubin and where in 2006 Arvo Kukumägi received the annual Estonian Radio acting award for the role of the father.

GERDA KORDEMETS. *Small Town Discontent – Chosen Way to Perceive Things*

Review of Leea Klemola's *Kokkola*, one of the recent Finnish comedy hits, staged in Pärnu Endla Theatre by Ingomar Vihmar. The author analyses the mentality of a small town described in the play and concludes that it is namely the small town

atmosphere that most vividly reveals the mentality of the Finns as well as Estonians, where one of the key words is 'small town discontent.

OUTI LAHTINEN. Comedy in Today's Finnish Theatre

The article is based on the paper presented at the 3rd days of Nordic drama in the Estonian Drama Theatre in late April. It tackles comedy in Finnish theatres, focusing on various aspects and keywords of the genre, such as: anti-emotionality, using items that lead an independent life and dealing with the notion of life and death.

MART LAAR. Fate of a General

Aleksander Eelmaa staged at R. A. A. M. Mart Kivastik's play *Soldier*, which describes the possible dialogue between a KGB officer and the general of the first Republic of Estonia towards the end of his life, although this never really happened. The general's character is based on facts from Johan Laidoner's life and his notes. Mart Laar evaluates the events of the play from the point of historical truth.

MUSIC

EVELIN LAGLE. Édith Piaf – a Woman Who Loved and Forgave a Lot

Review of *Piaf* by Dance Theatre Zick in Kumu Art Museum on 10, 12 and 13 April. Choreography and design: Dmitri Harchenko, video design: Einar Lints, lighting: Triin Hook.

The diverse and dramatic life of the French *chanson* singer, 'the sparrow of Paris', and her somewhat contradictory personality still intrigues and moves people today, to say nothing of her music. Dmitri Harchenko's production showed the impulses the choreographer got from the singer's life and work, and offered his vision through the two dancers, Irina Pähn and Endro Roosimäe. The choreographer relied on Piaf's inner world, not aiming to depict the singer's life but create a picture more on the basis of her art.

HANS-GUNTER LOCK, EVA KÜBAR. Mystery of Astrophysics: Gavin Bryars's To Define Happiness

Gavin Bryars (music) and Peeter Jalakas's multimedia work *To Define Happiness* premiered in Valior customs storage in Tallinn on 9 April 2007. Director Peeter Jalakas. Musical design: Olari Elts, artist: Kirke Kangro, choreography: Stanislav Varkki and Peeter Jalakas, lighting artist: Teemu Nurmelin, video artist: Ville Hyvönen, sound: Tanel Klesment, costumes: Reet Aus, lyrics Maarja Kangro. Performers: soloist Kädy Plaas (soprano) and NYJD Ensemble; actors were from theatre The Royal Giraffe, Von Krahl, troupe Zuga's United Dancers and Dance Theatre Fine 5.

The main initiator of the joint projects of the Von Krahl Theatre and NYJD Ensemble is mostly Peeter Jalakas, Bryars's work has been performed here before — *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1998), *A Man in a Room*, *Gambling* (2003). *To Define Happiness* were specially commissioned from Brayars, considering the possibilities available to Von Krahl and NYJD Ensemble. Idea by Peeter Jalakas, based on Stephen Hawking's texts from his book *A Brief History of Time*.

GERHARD LOCK, HANS-GUNTER LOCK. Anniversary of the Republic with Tüür's Piano Concerto and Tamberg's *Symphonic Dances*.

The extremely positive review examines the concert on the occasion of the 89th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, presenting works by Erkki-Sven Tüür and Eino Tamberg. The authors also describe processes inherent in Tüür's music, timbres and playing with different styles, and gives their views about Tüür's position in the world of contemporary music.

EVI ARUJÄRV. Days of Estonian Music 2007: Impressions and Provocations.

Thorough review by a leading Estonian music critic about the annual spring festival of Estonian music. The author concludes that the festival is fascinating but would benefit from clearer frames and a more compact set of ideas.

TÕNN SARV. Recollections of Mall Sarv

The Tartu pianist and piano teacher Mall Sarv is remembered as a fascinating person and musician. Her nephew, friend and former student presents his portrait of her.

CINEMA

MARTIN OJA. Changing Ideology of War Films (in connection with changing contextual expression and formal means)

The MA student of semiotics and cultural studies at University of Tartu analyses the ideological level of war films. He focuses on the changes in ideology, more precisely he compares two films of the forties and two made nearly fifty years later. The films are Michael Curtiz's „Casablanca” (1942), Allan Dwan's „Sands of Iwo Jima” (1949), Steven Spielberg's „Saving Private Ryan” (1998) and Jean-Jacques Annaud's „Enemy at the Gates” (2001). The main aspects include: how both sides in a war are presented and how the symbols of power (e.g. the flag) or relations of subordination are tackled. The last chapters of the long article examine the changes of concepts in sound tracks and camerawork. In conclusion the author finds that on the level of form the war films have moved from artistic and theatrical means of expression towards those imitating reality. Especially in sound, the development of which has followed the picture. In war films realism has thus become the new ideology. Realism seems an attempt to get rid of ideology, the death of ideology.

MATHURA. When Solution Means Destruction

Review of Francis Ford Coppola's Vietnam war film „Apocalypse Now” (1979) and its supplemented version that is fifty minutes longer, „Apocalypse Now Redux” (2001), shown also in Estonian cinemas not long ago. The critic who is also an artist and a poet and who has lived in India, finds that „Apocalypse Now” is a film founded on a state of mind. It tries to convey its message by way of the state of mind evoked in the viewers, rather than by the story it tells. This aim is fulfilled by several methods: firstly the film constitutes a journey further from the familiar civilisation, a kind of trip to the unknown edge of the world. There might not actually be a way back at all, both in the physical and psychological sense.

ÜLO PIKKOV. Realism in Animation Film

Theoretical analysis by the director of animated films and lecturer at the Estonian Academy of Arts about realism in animated films. The first example was Winsor McCay's film „The Sinking of the Lusitania, 1918) about the tragic fate of the cruise ship on the Atlantic Ocean in 1915. The article also examines the relations with realism of the full-length animated film „Pocahontas” (1995), and the elements of realism in Chris Landreth's film „Ryan” (2004) and in Nick Park's film „Creature Comforts” (1989). Pikkov points out that the issue of credibility is especially topical in the symbiosis of animation and feature film; Steven Spielberg's film „Jurassic Park” (1993) has been used as an example. The article is supplemented by various quotations of prominent film directors.

KAROL ANSIP. Insights into Estonian Documentary I

A lengthy overview of Estonian documentary films based on the author's MA work. The first part tells about Estonian documentaries and the first Estonian filmmaker Johannes Pääsuke (1892–1918), who recorded important local events, national holidays, cultural life and sporting events and made the political satire „Bear Hunt in Pärnumaa” (1914) based on true life. The author then tackles the production of filmmakers of the 1920s–1930s, focusing on two prominent men, Konstantin Märskä (1896–1951) and Theodor Luts (1896–1980). Ansip also describes the organisational side and institutions of filmmaking of the time. The first part of the article ends with 1940, the next part is published in the July issue of the magazine.

VAHUR KELLER. Conspiracy in Animation

Review of Kaspar Jancis's (1975) animation „Marathon” (2006). The reviewer, a theatre director, claims that everything in this film is 'exactly like in real life' – here, too, every character has a secret plan that he attempts to realise in the course of the film. In the name of joint conspiracy, some characters operate together, the others try on their own, but luckily they all do well in the end. In that sense, the film is even better than life. The whole film resembles rogue films in the best traditions, with additional element of the absurd. The film contains humour and action, but also a complicated and fascinating pattern of the plot where the final harmonious order and determination offer a special enjoyment in their own right.

PEETER SAUTER. A Step in the Right Direction

Review of the Estonian feature „Detour” (2007) by the German film director Dirk Hoyer (1973) who works in Estonia. The writer-reviewer regards the film as an excellent road-movie with genuine sentiments and without any ambitions of great art that would harass the director. A pleasant surprise was the rock musician Tanel Padar in the main role. There is also an interview with the film director.