

SUMMARIES MAY 2007

Opening Column

PEETER TOROP. *Staging Dostojevski*

Dostojevski was the surprise favourite author of the last theatre season: his plays were staged six times. On several occasions his unusual, humorous, side was emphasised. The author does not think that Dostojevski's absurd humour in theatre means just the arrival of postmodernist inertia in Estonia. The naturalness of the absurd humour in Dostojevski's artistic world makes it easy to understand the phenomenon that Camus called Dostojevski's man of the absurd. Shifting the borders of producing Dostojevski, also allows to expand the understanding of Dostojevski in general.

Replies

LAURI VÄINMAA

Longer interview with a prominent Estonian pianist Lauri Väinmaa. Maris Valk-Falk writes up Väinmaa's thoughts about his becoming a musician, about his teachers, studies in Moscow and London, favourite repertoire, teaching job and organising the festival „Piano”.

Persona grata

RASMUS MERIVOO

Portrait story about Rasmus Merivoo (1983) who recently graduated from the Baltic Film and Media School and achieved success with his first short films *What Colour is Love?* (2005) and *Alien – Saving Valdis in 11 Chapters* (2006). Merivoo is also known as a musician and produced film music for other students. He is currently involved, together with Kristin Kalamees, a full-length all-family film *Buratino*, a joint Estonia-Russia project.

THEATRE

VALLE-STEN MAISTE. *Gay for a Change – Stupidity or Solution?*

Taago Tubin produced Conor McPherson's play „Shining City” in Estonian Drama Theatre. One of its topics tackles haunting shadows of the past and therapies that are supposed to deal with them. According to Maiste the main issue here is – in case the harsh authority of the father no longer exists, are we then totally free to yield to opportunities and temptations, offered by life and the bright lights of the city? Man's identity cannot be changed by merely altering a few of its technical facets. This inevitably always produces symbolic chains.

PILLE-RIIN PURJE. *Specific Weight of Human Love*

The author examines three productions of Lembit Peterson in the last season at Theatrum: Karol Wojtyła's „Jeweller's Shop”, Fyodor Dostojevski's „White

Nights“ and Thomas Stearns Eliot’s „The Cocktail Party“. She sees them as a trilogy focused on the topic of love, offering a chance to ponder about matters eternal. Valuing the silence that organises and condenses our inner world is, according to the reviewer, one of the main features of *Theatrum*.

LIINA VALDRE. Is Man Pig?

In addition to the numerous Dostojevski-performances in Estonian theatres, the last season saw two interpretations of Dostojevski’s novel „Devils“ – by Kalev Kudu in Tartu Student Theatre and Hendrik Toompere in Estonian Drama Theatre. The article compares the two quite opposite productions, examines the differences in dramatisation and general style.

ETERI KEKELIDZE. Specifics of Russian Laughter in the Baltics

The co-operation of three Russian theatres in the Baltic countries compiled a unique theatre project: Moscow director Roman Kozak produced a composition on the basis of Fjodor Dostojevski’s short stories „Crocodile“, „Bean“ and „Another Man’s Wife and The Husband Under the Bed“ called „Russian Laughter“. The director wished to introduce Dostojevski not as a tragic, broken and sick clairvoyant, but as a phantasmagoric and funny author.

BORIS TUCH. Dostojevski’s Time

Overview of all the Dostojevski productions in professional theatres during the last season: Mark Rozovski’s „Crocodile“ in the Theatre of Vana Baskin (Old Baskin), Mikhail Tšumatšenko’s „Uncle’s Dream“ in Russian Theatre, co-operation of Russian theatres in the Baltic countries, Roman Kozak’s „Russian Laughter“, Lembit Peterson’s „White Nights“ in *Theatrum*, Hendrik Toompere’s „Devils“ in Estonian Drama Theatre, and additionally Matthias Anderson’s production „Crime, homework, punishment, money, killing of a pensioner“ on the basis of „Crime and Punishment“, directed in Drugoi Theatre by Erki Aule and Artjom Garejev.

MUSIC

EVELIN LAGLE. Faith in the Depth of the Essence of Movement. Tommi Kitti’s *Spiral* and *Still Life for Four Dancers*

Review of performances of Tommi Kitti & Co in Kumu on 16–17 February 2007. Besides his own troupe, Tommi Kitti, prominent Finnish dancers-choreographers, is currently also busy teaching the ballet troupe at the Finnish National Opera. *Spiral* is a duet danced by Tommi Kitti and Satu Halttunen, first performed in 2000. It is based on a spiral image, both in idea and in the language of movement and usage of space. *Still Life for Four Dancers* involves Inka Tiitinen, Virpi Juntti, Maarit Rankanen and Janne Marja-Aho. „The starting task is (...) simple: four dancers on stage... but since there are four dancers, maybe there is

something else as well?" says the choreographer in the programme. We see on stage the relations between dancers, energies, private lives and personal worlds...

Unio mystica GIDON KREMER

Cellist, pedagogue and music critic Toomas Velmet contemplates the life and art of the violinist Gidon Kremer in his jubilee year.

Letters to friends III . DMITRI SHOSTAKOVITCH (1906 – 1975)

(Beginning in *TMC 2006, no 11 and 2007 no 1*)

Musicologist **Tiia Järg** has chosen another batch of fragments from Dmitri Shostakovitch's letters to his friends. This (the last part) contains letters to Ivan Sollertinski (3. XII 1902 – 11. II 1944), who was the closest friend of Shostakovitch, the attentive observer and promoter of his work, at the time when standing for the truths in art occurred on the dangerous grounds of ideological fighting.

MAIT JÜRIADO. Cyber Studio and Veil of Noise.

Impressions about the multimedia evening of ensemble Cyber Studio at Kumu, presenting music by Timo Steiner, Tõnis Kaumann, Mart Siimer and Toivo Tulev.

KERRI KOTTA . Premiere of Galina Grigorjeva's Opera Scenes „Ant John J. Plenty and Grasshopper Dan”. Thoughts about relations between music and text.

Within the programme „Skazki / Fables”, NYVD Ensemble premiered Galina Grigoryeva's „Ant John J. Plenty and Grasshopper Dan”. Kerri Kotta argues about a composer's opportunities to relate to the text.

CINEMA

ANNIKA KOPPEL. Enjoying Cinema at Berlinale

Overview of the winning films at the 57th International Berlin Film Festival Berlinale. The Golden Bear went to the Chinese director Wang Quan'an's film *Tuya's Marriage*; the jury's Silver Bear was awarded to the Argentinian Ariel Rotter's film *The Other* and the Silver Bear for best direction belonged to the Israeli director Joseph Cedar and his *Beaufort*. The writer approves this choice, whereas she has her misgivings about the best acting awards going to Nina Hoss and Julio Chávez. She also describes the festival's special programmes, such as *Eat, Drink, See Movies – Celebrating Culinary Cinema*.

KERSTI UIBO. Somnambulism or Sleepwalkers

Overview of the student festival titled Sleepwalkers at the 10th Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, which took place last November, before the big festival. Grand prix went to Mikko Kuparinen's (Finland) film *Homevideo*, the best feature was Wojciech Kasperski's (Poland) *The Refuge City*, the best documentary Kullar Viimne's (Estonia) *Final Days* and the best animated film was Ian Mackinnon's (UK) *Adjustment*.

ARMO SEPANDI. We Will Certainly Meet in Tartu One Day

Review of Andres Maimik (1970) and Rain Tolk's (1977) feature film *186 Kilometres* (studio Kuukulgur Film, 2007) about the voyage from Tallinn to Tartu of the boozing and gambling addict actor Jan Uuspõld, recently sacked from theatre. He is offered a role in Tartu. This is a jolly road movie, where we meet various prominent society and political figures, plus a number of underdogs, hippies and losers. In several roles people play themselves under their own name in real life. The hugely successful and funny film is acclaimed also by the reviewer, as it has an excellent story and acting, with insightful episodes.

AARNE RUBEN. Avi Benjamin Exchanged Folk Waltz for Synagogue Music

Review of three films about Jews: Steven Spielberg's (1947) *Munich* (2005), Peeter Brambat (1954) and Irina Stelmach's (1951) *Your Name Shall Be Israel* (2004) and Maiju Ingman's (1979) *Runaway Home – Avi Benjamin* (2007, two latter by studio Adel TV). *Munich* tells about the hostage drama during the 1972 Olympic Games, where the Palestinian terrorists killed 11 Israeli sportsmen; *Your Name Shall Be Israel* is about the former concentration camp prisoners, and *Runaway Home – Avi Benjamin* about the famous Israeli composer Avi Benjamin, who was educated in Tallinn and worked as musical director in the Russian Drama Theatre. The reviewer likes the films, they are instructive, opening different aspects of Jewish culture and the opinions of the Jews from different aspects.

PEETER SAUTER. We Are All Cops and Rednecks

Review of the young director Rasmus Merivoo's (1983) short film *Alien – Saving Valdis in 11 Chapters* (Baltic Film and Media School, 2006), which quickly became a cult film, already watched on the Internet for half a million times. The film focuses on the manner of speaking of the so-called rednecks, their behavioural habits and worldview. The writer regards the film as a success, only the end where the protagonist Valdis flies away with a UFO, is somewhat artificial and does not ring true.

RUTH ALAKÜLA. Tormis's Sleigh Runs Via Folk Music Against the Current

Review of Sulev Keedus's (1957) documentary *Runic Songs of Tormis* (studio F-Seitse, 2005). The film tells about the composer Veljo Tormis and folk music and the theatre production titled *Estonian Ballads* based on his music. Analysing the construction of the film, the reviewer who makes music programmes for the TV,

finds that the film contains many layers and topics and some of them have been finished, but others not. This seems a maximal work where the aspirations surpass the message that exists in a mature form.