

**Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin**

**Žo Langerová, Peter Pavlac: Back Then in Bratislava**

Directed by Patrik Lančarič

First of Slovak productions we have seen in Divadelná Nitra was *Back then in Bratislava* written by Žo Langerová, adapted by Peter Pavlac. This year's theme was Ode to joy? with a subtitle past-present-future. In this production, all three are included because we, as a Slovaks, must deal with our past, which was not always pretty and nice. Production of Martin's theatre is one of performances helping us to find out how our past was. It is really connected to the present and it shows us what we do not want to live in future.

Fifties were in Slovakia really hard. Increasing of socialists' power, lack of liberty and duty to obey the state. In that time, many of people became emigrants, because they decided to leave their country of origin and look for better future. In the spectacle we were watching the story of a woman and we could think about her decisions and steps forward or backward.

For Patrik Lančarič, this was not the first work with the text of Žo. Few years ago, he prepared a radio play of Back then in Bratislava for a Slovak radio. For the theatre play, Peter Pavlac did an adaptation of a novel. What is the most interesting about the adaptation is mixing of a book and memories. Pavlac talked to the daughters of Žo Langerová, which are still living in Sweden. He spoke with them about their memories, about their lives described in the book. So the spectacle is a very complex look on a life of one woman.

Authors of the production choose a form with one narrator and a chorus. Žo Langerová is on stage during the whole performance, rest of characters is changing as it is needed. Jana Olhová is playing a kind of a monodramatic autobiographic play, speaking in a character of Žo Langerová about her live, about nonstop moving and running from your own country. The theme of leaving home is unfortunately nowadays too actual. The life of one woman who has the man in the prison and must deal with it was a really powerful story speaking loud about lack of liberty, toleration or helping each other. A moment when her friend comes to her new flat and gave her bread and some cheese was magical. But Lančarič always showed us both sides of a human. So after that generous friend come a neighbour with coffee and wood. In fact, he is not so generous; he just wants to abuse Žo. Two sides of one paper.

Back then in Bratislava is story played by one actress; other actors are only helping her to show us her life, or as we can say to read us her book. The testimony of a spectacle was stronger, and I think that most of spectators realised that they do not want this past to be repeated.

Alžbeta Rusnáková