



## Divadelná Nitra Festival 2020 - some observations and questions

„Territory ethos“ in the “year of Slovak theatre“ as motto - under very difficult covid 19-conditions...

A festival planned and which fortunately take place like the workshop after a lot of annulations and changes... Thanks again to the whole festival team for this!

I recognized a huge spectrum of forms, interesting aesthetic hybrids (theatre, performance, dance, music, visual arts) and strong *political* energies and questions of different forms of *identity* coming from the art. Forms of (national, cultural, political, gender) Identity have a history, a specific territory - but territories and identities are moving/changing under new conditions. So we already in Europe have to be sensible with our (collective) memory. To ask together again and again our individual and collective memory. Our Memory is also very vital because we (still) learn from the past, by reasking it. Because the past could not only fixed like an installation in a kind of museum. So the question is how to treat and how to deal with individual/collective traces? Documentary forms seems to have still power and aesthetic potentials, but these forms have also their limits... So how to deal with the real? How to deal with personal history, how to take biography as material, how to think it (much) bigger, how to play with (auto-)fictional strategies? How to invent new forms which take care of the power of history and the power of presence? Why and how forms of (live) art can also invent future and create new territories?

Question of relationship between aesthetical, philosophical, historical, religious, political, ethical point of views who are related in form of “relational arts“ and who opens also a *social space* shared and lived by the artists and the public.

I also see the potential power of *open forms*, more *collective authorship* and more *transparency* by proposing different forms of “making of-aesthetics“. Rehearsal processes and conditions of artistic working also as *social framing* are getting more and more important - means they are really visible in the “final“ (unclosed) artistic positions. Really to share *collective experiences* in Performances with the artists creates a more sensible form of sharing time and space together and to move together framings, open *new ways of perception and responsibility*. So the main question for a festival like in Nitra is how to share together creative processes and which *social potential* could they develop to open new doors. To propose alternatives, to enrich humanity/collaborativity...

To have more questions than optional answers seems to me very important after seeing performances. Artistic research also in the cadre of a festival and in form of performances is not to confirm answers which are already known. And i/we got the questions and we discussed them in a concentrate way of critical thinking in our workshop as in the very fruitful dialogues with

some artists. But i/we got also some answers/new aesthetic strategies in the question of *crisis of representation*...

A complexe "Art of conversation" which can only realize a festival like Divadelná in this high concentration...

Hope that we can go further next year under better conditions! Do we need really a digitalization of the theatre? Sure, the (aesthetical) relationship between analog and digital forms of theatre is changing, not only because of the virus. New forms will be invented.

But theatre is and will stay first of all *live art* and that is its central quality. It is not a question of a battle between the analog and the digital. It is a question of rich relationship between both, a question of *form consciousness* after breaking frontiers.

To be concrete:

**Heretical essays:** Not only a question of power and influence of history until today. Also a question of potential of *philosophie on stage*, question of form, means potential of *scenic essay*. Also question of engaged philosophie and its political dimension. First 1977 seems far away (and not really my/our concrete history), but while watching, the performance cross borders and invite me/us to think about European history/identity. And to think very concrete about the present *crises*. It is up to us to continue thinking about, to take responsibility... Going forwards needs also to look back.

**Now show tonight:** Just 12 years later in 1989... Some similar questions (political crisis, censorship, freedom of mind, responsibility of artists...) interesting to compare these two positions.

And also very interesting because the performance treats also the question of *generations* - older generation as real "temoin" of history, but also question about how *two generations of artists* play/act together on stage. To combine and to confront real historical facts/documents with a fiction/literary quality (Ibsen today).

**The czech comedy...**: First of all a possibility to discover a piece of theatre which is not often performed. 450 Years old questions concerning morality/ethos are not so simple as it seems first - and interesting because of the form/way of acting (entre autre question of self-presentation) of the director and the actors invented. Also freedom to the public to create actual links (also out of Europe)...

**Love you and take care:** What does it mean to be a young woman today? Which are the consequences and (political, religious, social, economic) conditions and background of motherhood? A strong *female and collective perspective* of a performer group who is interested in searching *pure performative* moments and to share them with the public, a collective of young female artists who are really with their individual history *present* instead of falling back in *representation patterns*.

Also interesting in the question how *polyphone* could be a monologue. Very personnel (and not private) monologues which are combined as an invitation for a *dialogue*...

**In The solitude:** A performance which is already interesting, because the Koltès-tradition in east-europe is not so important than for example like in France (Patrice Cheraud...) or in Germany. An inspiring performance because of different reasons: how to rewrite/translate on stage the pièce today?; corporality of the text and the tension to the individual *body language* /very corporal/sensible choreography of the two performers, the fine musicality of the two performers; the tension between the abstract and concrete dimension of the pièce/performance and last but not least: How to share (also with the public) different *forms of desire* today? Also the question of utopical/dystopical potential in relationship today.

**The norm:** Question of contemporary forms and significances of *Applied theatre* which motivates also a (new) kind of *democracy* on stage/in art.

I remember the clear and very simple form (way of performing and following concrete advices, stage design: moving the boxes: re-/deconstruction). A strong form and a disciplinary on stage is the condition for *freedom* of the acting mentally challenged actors. It is not at all a contradiction (see also the performances directed by Jerome Bel...)! What is the norm? What are the norms? Do we share them? Who makes the norms? This performance is also fascinating in asking the question of *modi of self-presentation* or the tension between "to be (just) present" and to "represent myself".

*Stay healthy and take care! Hope to see you really next year for the 30. Anniversary in Nitra!  
Best wishes from Berlin, Stefan Tigges*