

The Ephemeral Pass of Happiness

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I was thinking recently about that drive of the critic that makes him watch a theater show after a theater show without saturation, boredom and fatigue. His entire personality may be filled with memories of scenic images and pictures, with tracks of acting roles and poses. He may be impressed by the searching advice or careless of it artists, he may be charged with or discouraged by meaningful or useless encounters. But he does not stop there, hoping to be surprised, to experience an unexpectedly meaningful by itself theatrical event on the stage. How often does he focus on shows that look like „a good job“, but do not „touch“ his inner world. They join the group of the familiar, banal, ambitious, despite the enthusiastic energy of their creators. They can be explained, compared, classified in a hierarchy, but by another type of evaluative attitude. To describe „this particular kind“ of critic there should be something else – a strong, striking, deep empathy, so that he gets ready for writing, though it may sound sentimental today. The ephemeral moment of happiness is grabbed, incorporated, carried by all the signs-signals for a really meaningful and profound theater art, to which a kind of „care“ is „vital“. And, thankfully, this moment still emerges on Bulgarian stages on the part of talented and inspired people.

Here's a modest part of the conception of „the high points“ of the sentimental critic.

Warm September days in Plovdiv. An enchanting starry sky over the amphitheatric summer cinema „Orfey“ and a plastic garbage van on the stage. It is 10:00 P.M and exhausting from the daily performances is felt. What will take place around this garbage-can? The program of the XX International Puppet Festival „Three are too many – two not enough“ is so rich and intensive that there is no time for a break or exchange of information and opinions. The curiosity is calling every part of you and with the new, expanded program of the street theater performances, the stay becomes a constant running between the halls and other spaces. By the garbage-can stood a naive, beautiful girl

with household apron (Adelina Ilieva) and we understand from her that she has come to look for the key of her apartment, probably thrown out with the trash. This familiar situation sets the beginning of the show „**The lost key**“ of State Puppet Theatre – Vidin (playwright, director and scenographer Magdalena Miteva). Until the garbage-can does not turn to be the place of the hobo (Krasimir Kolev), and the meeting does not become an unusual adventure. The main player is Imagination. The man invents a way to communicate and gain a new friendship by transforming objects from the trash into unexpected shapes and images and illustrates his ideas with fragments of glass, plastic, paper and plastic bags. „The animated“ new characters situate a different point of view, reverse the one-sided picture of their purpose and rush into a race to surprise, to break typical, pretending to be optimist, thinking and behavior of the worried housewife. All the parts of the garbage-can dance magically, even it is ready to fly like a spacecraft to the stars, but now with two people on board, who have felt the poetic side of life, with the ability of fantasy to create and transform them even in the most miserable environment. „The Lost Key“ is a performance-code to unlock the narrow-minded contemporary person from the limitations of the arranged and suggested patterns of living, an example of a change of „the winter sleep“, of „the madness“ to be normal. This performance is made as if in defiance of the hostility of the crowded, kitschy, spiritually miserable and unhappy today life, full of unfriendly and troubled people. The author's idea, the fascinating actors in the smart and creative game of the director's imagination transfer the viewers to a beautiful impulse of humanity, tenderness and understanding of the Other, a willingness to support the Lost.

Warm September days again, this time in Sofia. The event is important, rich in various aspects and shows – this is the VII edition of „Puppet Fair“ – an international festival for street and Puppet Theatre (initiative and host of the event is the Central Puppet Theatre). Diversity, temptation of titles, well known names of guest and home artists and finally – finding what you want to see. For me it turned out to be experience in the two extremes – „On the edge“ of Atom Theater (Bulgaria) and „Clowns' houses“ of Merlin Puppet Theatre (Greece). On one hand – exhilarating, on the other stunning. „**On the Edge**“ is an original show of three young artists – Stefan Georgiev, Hristo Takov and Kamen Marin in the newly created by them theater. On the stage it is always evident when the result is the outcome of a collective conception, drive and purpose. The collected, concentrated and brought to artistic achievement energy inevitably is transmitted towards the viewer. „On the edge“ is a performance without words, but with a very clear and eloquent language of the suggestions. It is a story about the course of life, the search, the efforts, the communication, the human aspiration to risk and reinvent the world of art. This story is helped by the language of the mask,

„Изгубеният ключ“
„The lost key“



the dance, the group flexibility and the pantomime in musically-expressive environment (composer Dimitar Elenski). All the means are well known, but combined into a harmonious whole, into a well-read rhythm and speed of the actors' tasks in situations of passing of the performance techniques, they create a dynamic stage action. It feels like racing in a breathless pace, pause and transformation into a new drive. The faces are not visible, but the movement of the bodies, the play with objects and small puppets, the selected gestures suggest the unlimited possibilities of human presence in terms of imagination and fantasy. Small, but accurate color spots in the graphic tone of the scenography and the costumes complement the highest theatrical taste and aesthetic measure of the spectacular artists from Atom Theater.

At the other extreme fits the Greek show „Clowns' houses“. From it you would like to run and that is the power of its impact. Because it focuses on the darkness of today's life and portrays characters that are lost in a hopeless and lonely existence. The living space consists of small rooms, part of the apartment - cells of a building with the most common household items - TV, arm-chair, fridge, dining table. In this narrow space the puppeteers Dimitris Stamu and Demi Papada move the figures of its inhabitants, whose faces are masks, frozen with a different expression, silent and slow in their movements, but with a com-

mon label: „There is no point in living“. Communication, even sexual, is in front of the TV screen, eating is a mechanical reach to the refrigerator, entertainment - the regular vacuuming. Silence, lonely gazing over the balcony and walls, behind which you can hear and see - a theater of shadows - family quarrels and other sounds of the community coexistence. „Clowns' houses“ (directed and scenographed by Dimitris Stamu) is a show - sharing the repelling presence of the emptiness, of the senselessness as part of the universal sadness, which accompanies today's civilization, which does not see escape and hope for the human being. The show is painful, harming, but expertly played and stage illustrated by the means of the minimalist scenery of real objects, moved by a person-puppet with a grotesque mask, in the obscure atmosphere of precisely elaborated lighting.

What unites the chosen shows? The fact, that they are result of a collective authorship, of the ability to transmit a meaningful idea from a collective performance and finally to bear a great sensitivity to the unrevealed problems and desires of the contemporary person.

And more „high points“ dominate my heart, enchanted by the real actors of the Puppet Theatre, who apparently believe in and bring miracles, since they make happy also the adults in the hall. ■

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„Панаир на куклите“, който се проведе от 16 до 22 септември 2012 г. в София, организиран от Столичния куклен театър с подкрепата на Столична община в десетата година от своето създаване се превърна във фестивал на град София. Защото тази година бяха „присвоени“ нови пространства - в Театър „София“, Младежки театър, Театър „Българска армия“, Ателие 313 - където се играха спектакли от фестивала, както и на сцените на театъра - домакин. И въпреки лошото време - на различни места в София имаше театрални „акции“, които зрителите, подготвени от предишни срещи с уличните артисти, очакваха с любопитство. Седем дни столицата бе по-пъстра, по-цветна, по-приказна. Организаторите на фестивала са целели да представят кукленото изкуство в различните му формати, да срещнат зрителите не само със забавното лице на кукления театър, а и да покажат неговото развитие, насоки, добри образци, новостите, които вълнуват творците му по световните сцени. Наситената програма не ми позволи да видя всички предлагани спектакли, а и съвсем скоро се бях завърнала от Пловдив и провеждания там фестивал „Двама са малко - трима са много“, където имаха участие няколко от българските постановки, включени в Панаир на куклите. От една страна това реши моят проблем с избора на

„Бременските музиканти“
„The Bremen musicians“