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09.20

18:30
Barbarians
State Youth Theatre
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Árpád Schilling
State Youth Theatre, Big Hall
210’

09.21

17:00
Life is a dream
MMLAB (Arts and Science Lab)
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Gediminas Rimeika
Arts Printing House, Black Hall
120’

20:30
Fossilia
Lithuanian National Drama Theatre
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Eglė Švedkauskaitė
Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, New Stage
120’

22:30
Once upon a Vilnius
Film screening accompanied by live music
Meno avilys
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Eitvydas Doškus
Live music: Vygintas Kisevičius and Paulius Kilbauskas
OPERA Social House
23’
Free entrance

09.22

11:00
Presentation of the Lithuanian Theatre Showcase
Meeting with programme curator Ana Ablamonova
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Caffeine Roasters (Pylimo str. 19)

Vilnius poker (Art exhibition)
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Oskaras Koršunovas
MO Museum
The exhibition is open until January 28

18:00
Brave New Body
Operomanija
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Authors: Žygimantas Kudirka, Arturas Bumšteinas
Arts Printing House, Black Hall
60’

18:00
Audio tour
Rietavas gardener
Audio theatre “Bilietų nėra”, Vilnius International Theatre Festival “Sirenos”
Club

Creative team: Andrius Šiurys, Rimantas Ribačiauskas, Regina Šiurytė-Šimulienė, Rasa Kregždaitė
Rietavas manor park
Free entrance

19:30
The Metamorphosis
Lithuanian National Drama Theatre
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Oliver Frlić
Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, New Stage
90’

09.23

10:30
Guided
Arts Agency “Arstcape”
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Mantas Jančiauskas
Pravieniškės prison facility
120’

15:00
Found Found Found
Šiauliai State Drama Theatre
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Naubertas Jasinskas
Šiauliai State Drama Theatre, Big Hall
85’

19:30
Fragment
Klaipėda Drama Theatre
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Dmitry Krymov
Klaipėda Drama Theatre, Big Hall
90’

09.24

16:00
The Choice
Vilnius Theatre “Lélé”
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė
Vilnius Theatre “Lélé”, Big Hall
60’

18:00
The Silence of the Sirens
Lithuanian National Drama Theatre
Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Director Laura Kutkaitė
Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, Small Stage
105’

21:00
Lithuanian Theatre showcase awards
Club

Directors: Eglė Švedkauskaitė with the creative team of “Memoirs of a Young Man”
OPERA Social House
Free entrance

09.27

19:00
The Repetition. Histoire(s) du Théâtre (I)
International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM) (Switzerland, Germany)
International programme

Director Milo Rau (Switzerland)
Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, New Stage
100’

09.28

19:00
The Repetition. Histoire(s) du Théâtre (I)
International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM) (Switzerland, Germany)
International programme

Director Milo Rau (Switzerland)
Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, New Stage
100’

09.29

From 19:00
Mount Average
CAMPO Gent, Ism & Heit (Germany, Belgium, Netherlands)
International programme

Director Julian Hetzel (Germany)
Arts Printing House, Black Hall
70’

09.30

17:00
Discussion (In english)
Memories in Urban Space
Club

Participants: the creative team of “Mount Average”
Moderator: Rasa Antanavičiūtė
Arts Printing House, Pocket Hall
70’

From 15:00 and 19:00
Mount Average
CAMPO Gent, Ism & Heit (Germany, Belgium, Netherlands)
International programme

Director Julian Hetzel (Germany)
Arts Printing House, Black Hall
70’

10.01

16:00
Film (in English)
The Family
NTGent (Belgium)
Club

Director Milo Rau
Arts Printing House, Pocket Hall
90’
Free entrance

19:00
Easy Things
Teatr im. Stefana Jaracza w Olsztynie (Poland)
International programme

Director Anna Karasińska
Arts Printing House, Black Hall
60’
Free entrance

10.02

11:00
Workshop (in English)
Working from personal substance
Club

Director Anna Karasińska (Poland)
Art printing house, Studio 2
240’
More information about participation
www.sirenos.lt

16:30
Film (in English)
The New Gospel
IIPM, Fruitmarket, Langfilm (Switzerland, Germany)
Club

Director Milo Rau
Arts Printing House, Pocket Hall
107’
Free entrance

18:20
Meeting with director Milo Rau (in English)
Moderator Alma Braškytė
Club

Arts Printing House, Pocket Hall
50’
Free entrance

20:00
Discussion (in English)
Who is the author of text?
Club

Participants: Milo Rau (Switzerland), Anna Karasińska (Poland), Eglė Švedkauskaitė (Lithuania)
Moderator: Naubertas Jasinskas
Arts Printing House, Pocket Hall
Free entrance

10.03

11:00
Workshop (in English)
Working from personal substance
Club

Director Anna Karasińska (Poland)
Art printing house, Studio 2
240’

More information about participation
www.sirenos.lt

10.04

19:00
Encounters. Vilnius
The Feminist Secret Society of Helsinki (Finland)
International programme

Directors Katri Naukkarinen, Amanda Palo and Olga Palo
Arts Printing House, Pocket Hall
90’
Free entrance

10.05

19:00
Encounters. Vilnius
The Feminist Secret Society of Helsinki (Finland)
International programme

Directors Katri Naukkarinen, Amanda Palo and Olga Palo
Arts Printing House, Pocket Hall
90’
Free entrance

10.06

18:00
Audio tour
Rietavas gardener
Audio theatre “Bilietų nėra”, Vilnius International Theatre Festival “Sirenos”
Club

Creative team: Andrius Šiurys, Rimantas Ribačiauskas, Regina Šiurytė-Šimulienė, Rasa Kregždaitė
Verkiai Regional Park
Free entrance

20:30
Jumpcore
Zachęta National Gallery of Art (Poland)
Club

Choreographer Paweł Sakowicz
Arts Printing House, Black Hall
40’

10.08

19:00
Blood Stories Lithuania
Mala Voadora (Portugal), Vilnius International Theatre Festival “Sirenos”
International programme

Creators: Jorge Andrade, Jonas Jurkūnas
Arts Printing House, Black Hall
90’

When thinking of the word in the theatre, I think first of silence. The silence in which texts for and about theatre are written, the silence in the auditorium just before the performance begins, the silence between the words, between the actors, between the theatre and the rest of the world outside. Silence to take a breath: for living and creating.

In the second half of the 20th century Susan Sontag wrote an essay „The Aesthetics of Silence“. Observing the changing world and art, she reflected on the importance of words, language, meaning and silence for her time. With WORD as the theme of the “Sirenos” Festival almost sixty years later we are doing the same: trying to understand the importance of words, language, meaning and silence in our time. What does it take to hear each other? To make a word meaningful? How do we use words to build roads rather than walls?

This year “Sirenos” will speak and stay silent about WORD in performances, films, discussions, meetings, concerts, an exhibition, journeys outside of Vilnius, and in this publication. Alongside the programme, the creators, and the festival team members, here You will find some texts on words, theatre, and the word in theatre, that expand the topic of the 20th edition of the festival.

With a little bit of Your time and silence the WORD will unclosethese itself.

Kristina Steiblytė

20 festivals

76 companies and theatres from 28 countries

41 Lithuanian theatres and companies

18 winners of the Europe prize for New Theatrical Realities

10 international directors who started working in Lithuania

1 performance debated in the Lithuanian Parliament

**1 experimental festival during the pandemic
with 6 premieres**

Dear festival friends, former and current colleagues, artists, partners, guests, friends on social media, friends who have our backs, theatre critics, simply critics, viewers, listeners, participants, and all who I haven't mentioned yet but who have been with SIRENOS for the past twenty years.

Thank you for being with us because without you there would be no us.

Twenty years together is like a porcelain wedding anniversary. Porcelain is beautiful but also fragile. It is not easy for a small festival to sustain itself during the times of war, pandemic, climate crisis, and inflation. However, we try our best and today we celebrate the fact that we are together, that we create SIRENOS together with the Lithuanian theatre community and that it is a theatre feast for all of us.

This year we choose to focus on its excellency, the Word. The word is omnipotent and omnipresent, it can turn into a body or a space. The word is like a basic Lego construction block that can easily connect with other blocks and build magnificent works – plays, discussions, scientific work, textbooks, and poetry.

However, some types of phenomenon that we encounter do not have words created to describe them; they exist like unknown species in the depth of unresearched oceans. We sort of have a feeling that they exist but unnamed species have a tendency to stay abstract, undefined by specific properties. Having said this, a word has popped up in my head, coined by the writer and activist Rebecca Solnit in her essay „Men Explaining Things To Me“. The word is „mansplaining“. When Solnit came up with it, it in no time spread over internet as it was instantly recognized by so many people. Together with the word there came a collective recognition of a

phenomenon, a collective therapy and an arsenal of weapons to fight it.

Artists are often diving into the undiscovered oceans of the unconscious and imagination, and they are fishing for unknown species of phenomena, then trying to bring them into the daylight – on the stage or otherwise, give them a name, a title, a kind of tangibility. The world we are living in today is marked by anxiety and uncertainty, so in this context we absolutely need the “divers“ who can come up with new words, marking the existence of new worlds.

Contemporary theatre uses text oftentimes as a tool to dissect the reality and to challenge the power structures. In 2018, Swiss director Milo Rau issued an artistic manifesto as he became the artistic director of NT Gent in Belgium. The manifesto stirred up a lot of discussions in artistic circles because it declared that theatre is no longer about portraying the world, it is about changing it. And Milo Rau gave a set of rules that he and his team would follow in order for this change to come about. The manifesto, text and word have an utmost significance in Milo Rau's work, and this is why we have chosen him as a central figure in this year's festival. “La reprise. Histoire(s) du théâtre (I)” will be presented as a vision of the theatre artist who is actively promoting the change in the world.

The topic of change is also dominant in Julian Hetzel's “Mount Average”, an installation-performance delving into the subject of history, which puts us facing the post-colonial power structures marked by all kinds of violence towards someone who is different. However, for me the performance fixates with the word “Hope”, which is applied to the vision of the future that we are all constructing at this very moment.

Polish director Anna Karasinska in her performance “Easy Things” uses text in her own very specific manner. It seems that not the words are important here but the pauses and spaces between them. There is a lot of space left for meaning between words in the dialogues of the two actresses on stage who talk about very personal and yet very universal experiences of women in contemporary society.

SIRENOS has also prepared two premieres, which are collaborations between international and Lithuanian artists. Performance “Encounters. Vilnius” is a collaboration with The Feminist Secret Society of Helsinki (Finland). This inclusive performance is putting representation in the centre of the piece. How would we communicate with each other if the words we hear from another human is all that we have, they are stripped of the gender, social class, race, ethnicity, age, anything?

The festival will close with a collaboration of the Portuguese company “Mala Voadora” and the Lithuanian composer Jonas Jurkūnas, “Blood Stories. Lithuania”. Two artists, a Portuguese and a Lithuanian, start off with a DNA test. Their narrative on the stage is focused on finding a common narrative between the two men's DNA samples, over the thousands years of migration, trade, colonialism, travel, war and love.

The Lithuanian theatre showcase will spread „the word“ of producer Ana Ablamonova, who has curated the programme and is presenting a diverse panorama of theatre, visual arts, film and music, giving way to experiments and contexts.

The educational programme of the club is curated by teatrologist Ugnė Kačkauskaitė who is inviting the audiences and professionals to a series of events: workshops, meetings, discussions,

aftertalks, film screenings. The artistic part of the SIRENOS club is as always curated by composer Agnė Matulevičiūtė. Along with the opening feast and the Lithuanian showcase award ceremony, the club will present a dance piece by the Polish dance artist Paweł Sakowicz entitled “Jumpcore”.

Words and music will intertwine in a sound experience created by composer Andrius Šiurys about his small native town of Rietavas. The sound walk can be experienced in Rietavas as well as Vilnius. The project is produced by “Bilietų nėra”, producer Rasa Kregždaitė.

So stay with us and let us celebrate theatre, culture, life.

“Ilgiausių metų!” is the phrase we use in Lithuanian when we want to wish many happy returns.

Kristina Savickienė

J. L. Austin

“How to Do Things with Words”

We shall take, then, for our first examples some utterances which can fall into no hitherto recognized *grammatical* category save that of ‘statement’, which are not nonsense, and which contain none of those verbal danger signals which philosophers have by now detected or think they have detected (curious words like ‘good’ or ‘all’, suspect auxiliaries like ‘ought’ or ‘can’, and dubious constructions like the hypothetical): all will have, as it happens, humdrum verbs in the first person singular present indicative active. Utterances can be found, satisfying these conditions, yet such that

- A. they do not ‘describe’ or ‘report’ or constate anything at all, are not ‘true or false’; and
- B. the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as saying something.

This is far from being as paradoxical as it may sound or as I have meanly been trying to make it sound: indeed, the examples now to be given will be disappointing.

Examples:

(E. a) ‘I do (sc. take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)’ - as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony.

(E. b) ‘I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth’ - as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.

(E. c) ‘I give and bequeath my watch to my brother’ as occurring in a will.

(E. d) ‘I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.’

In these examples it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it. None of the utterances cited is either true or false: I assert this as obvious and do not argue it. It needs argument no more than that ‘damn’ is not true or false: it may be that the utterance ‘serves to inform you’ - but that is quite different. To name the ship is to say (in the appropriate circumstances) the words ‘I name, &c.’. When I say, before the registrar or altar, &c., ‘I do’, I am not reporting on a marriage: I am indulging in it.

The action may be performed in ways other than by a performative utterance, and in any case the circumstances, including other actions, must be appropriate. But we may, in objecting, have something totally different, and this time quite mistaken, in mind, especially when we think of some of the more awe-inspiring performatives such as ‘I promise to...’. Surely the words must be spoken ‘seriously’ and so as to be taken ‘seriously’? This is, though vague, true enough in general - it is an important commonplace in discussing the purport of any utterance whatsoever. I must not be joking, for example, nor writing a poem. But we are apt to have a feeling that their being serious consists in their being uttered as (merely) the outward and visible sign, for convenience or other record or for information, of an inward and spiritual act: from which it is but a short step to go on to believe or to assume without realizing that for many purposes the outward utterance is a description, true or false, of the occurrence of the inward performance. The classic expression of this idea is to be found in the Hippolytus, where Hippolytus says

ἡ γλῶσσ’ ὀμώμοχ’, ἡ δὲ φρήν ἀνώμοτος

i.e. ‘my tongue swore to, but my heart (or mind or other backstage artiste) did not!’ Thus ‘I promise to...’ obliges me - puts on record my spiritual assumption of a spiritual shackle.

It is gratifying to observe in this very example how excess of profundity, or rather solemnity, at once paves the way for immortality. For one who says ‘promising is not merely a matter of uttering words! It is an inward and spiritual act!’ is apt to appear as a solid moralist standing out against a

generation of superficial theorizers: we see him as he sees himself, surveying the invisible depths of ethical space, with all the distinction of a specialist in the *s2ti* generis. Yet he provides Hippolytus with a let-out, the bigamist with an excuse for his ‘I do’ and the welsher with a defence for his ‘I bet’. Accuracy and morality alike are on the side of the plain saying that our word is our bond.

Published in: J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 4–6; 9–10 p.

International programme

The Repetition. Histoire(s) du Théâtre (I)

La Reprise. Histoire(s) du théâtre (I)

International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM)
(Germany, Switzerland)

Premiere: 2018
Duration: 100 min.
Dates: 27, 28 September | 19:00
Venue: Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, New stage
(Gedimino av. 4)

* Bright lights, intense sound and smoke used in the performance.

Performance in Lithuania is supported by:

swiss arts council
prohelvetia

Concept author and director:
Milo Rau

Text:
Milo Rau and ensemble
Research and dramaturgy:
Eva-Maria Bertschy

Dramaturgic collaboration:
Stefan Bläske,
Carmen Hornbostel

Set and costume design:
Anton Lukas

Video:
Maxime Jennes,
Dimitri Petrovic

Light design:
Jurgen Kolb

Sound design and technical director:
Jens Baudisch

Production management:
Mascha Euchner-Martinez,
Eva-Karen Tittmann

Camera:
Maxime Jennes
Moritz Von Dungern

Assistant director:
Carmen Hornbostel

Assistant dramaturg:
François Pacco

Assistant set designer:
Patty Eggerickx

Fight choreography:
Cédric Cerbara

Vocal coaching:
Murielle Legrand

Musical arrangement:
Gil Mortio

Public relations:
Yven Augustin

Performers:
Sara De Bosschere/Kristien de Proost, Suzy Cocco, Sébastien Foucault, Fabian Leenders, Johan Leysen/Sabri Saad El hamus, Tom Adjibi/Adil Laboudi

Background actors:
Mustapha Aboulkhir, Stefan Bläske, Tom De Brabandere, Elise Deschambre, Thierry Duirat, Stéphane Gornikowski, Kevin Lerat, François Pacco, Daniel Roche de Oliveira, Laura Sterckx, Adrien Varsalona



Photo: Hubert Amiel

Technical staff on tour: Jim Goossens Bara, Maxime Jennes, Moritz von Dungern (kamera), Sylvain Faye, Sebastian König (šviesos), Pierre-Olivier Boulant, Jens Baudisch (garsas), François Pacco (titrai), Mascha Euchner-Martinez, Anna Königshofer (gastroli vadybininkės). Stage equipment made in the workshop of National Theatre Wallonie-Bruxelles.

One April night in 2012, Ihsane Jarfi talks to a group of young men in a grey VW Polo in front of a gay club in Liège. Two weeks later he is found dead at the edge of a wood. He had been violently murdered after being tortured for hours. The crime upsets and unsettles the entire city.

From the very beginning, theatre has been an incantation of the dead, a ritualized experience of original sins and collective traumas. In “The Repetition”, the first part of a series curated by Milo Rau titled “Histoire(s) du théâtre”, the director and author approaches tragedy in the form of a multi-perspective narrative of a criminal case in 5 acts. Milo Rau and his actors set out to discover a capital crime, in search of the essential emotions of tragic experiences: loss and grief, truth and falsehood, disaster and fear, cruelty and terror. Professional and non-professional actors ponder the glamour and depths of life and theatre and slip into the roles of the protagonists involved in a brutal murder case.

What is at the beginning of a crime? Intention or coincidence? What part does the audience play? How much is the collective to blame? And who is on stage? Milo Rau and his team return to the fundamental problems of their artistic work over the last 15 years: the question of representability of violence and traumatic events on stage – in search of the essence of the fundamentally tragic human condition and in celebration of the power of theatre.

Milo Rau is a Swiss director of political and documentary theatre. His provocative pieces touch the open nerve, talks about social issues, and do not shy away from difficult topics, reflection on social traumas. Important part of Milo Rau’s work is in-depth research, reconstruction of events, witness interviews, and travels around the world in search of answers.

Milo Rau is not only a theatre director. He is also a filmmaker, sociologist, writer and journalist. Before starting to work in theatre, he reported from conflict zones: Northern Iraq, Syria. In 2007 he founded the International Institute of Political Murder. Together with his creative team, he engages in activism, organises debates on social and political issues, gives lectures, and publishes books.

I have long wanted to introduce Lithuanian theatre audiences to Milo Rau, one of the most renowned European directors of our time, a visionary who sets the rules of the new theatre ethics and strives to follow them. The creator first caught my eye in 2018, when he assumed the role of Artistic Director at the NTGent Theatre in Belgium and published a theatrical manifesto that shook the European scene like no other phenomenon in recent decades. In that same year, he initiated the ‘Histoire(s) du théâtre’ (History(ies) of Theatre), an ongoing series of plays where a different distinguished director produces a play each year reflecting on the past and present of theatre. ‘The Repetition. Histoire(s) du théâtre (I)’ was the first play in the series. One might wonder how much of Milo Rau’s ambitious vision of theatre, or his manifesto, which declared that theatre must enact change in the world, was merely words on paper, and how much of it has transformed into an embodied vision. And how does Milo Rau himself, who has left NTGent in June this year, see it today? You will have the opportunity to ask the director himself, as he will be visiting Vilnius on 2 October to meet the audience.

The title, ‘The Repetition. Histoire(s) du théâtre (I)’, alludes to both repetition and rehearsal. As the Latin saying goes, ‘repetition is the mother of learning’. Perhaps by revisiting the most terrible events in human history, the outbreaks of violence, and the banality of evil, by rewinding the tape over and over again, we can glean valuable lessons on how to prevent their recurrence in reality. Maybe we can grasp the moment when crime is born and thus become able to prevent it.

Artistic director of the festival
Kristina Savickienė

SIRENOS questions to Milo Rau:

What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

The films of the Frères Dardenne and the Greek Tragedies.

What inspired your performance?

It was very simple: I searched a case that would represent the principle of the tragic in a totally mundane way. Murderer and victim, meeting at the crossroads, like Oedipus and Laius. A total and tragic coincidence. How can we give meaning to this?

Mount Average

Germany, Netherlands, Belgium
CAMPO Gent, Ism & Heit



Photo: Tina Herbots

For centuries, art has been used to enhance the glory of the nation, its great leader and the political ideology. The effigies of figures such as Lenin, Hitler, Mao, Stalin or Leopold II are part of the collective memory. They also are a physical representation of a particular regime, a specific era, an ideology. Statues are there for eternity, immutable, in materials that effortlessly outlive a nation. Or, in some cases, even in materials that carry the trauma of what is represented. Like the copper used for a bust of Leopold II that came directly from Congolese mines.

Though the show is certainly not just about Belgian colonial history, through Julian Hetzel's collaboration with Kristien De Proost and Brussels-Congolese theatre-maker and rapper Pitcho Womba Konga, among others, the urgency of the link to post-colonial Belgium quickly became clear. *Mount Average* questions acquired rights, traditions, privileges and wealth, ideologies and totalitarian ideas, aspects that every (post-colonial) society carries with it. The trauma of the past was long hidden away, but we can no longer avoid it. In this performance Julian Hetzel uses the busts of historical figures, rulers, tyrants and dictators as source material to deconstruct that static past and then rework it, make it fluid. They are grinded into dust, and after adding fluids, they take on a flexible form. Performers and audience eventually process the matter into something new. In this way, the past is not erased, but deconstructed and rearranged into a flexible new entity. The future will be fluid.

Julian Hetzel is a well-known German artist. He studied in the DasArts School in Amsterdam – one of Europe's foremost artistic research laboratories for the exploration of new forms of theatre. The same applies to Hetzel's work – he creates pieces that do not fit into any definitions, combine different art forms, seek a close, direct, immediate contact with the audience. Hetzel likes to play with traditions, pop culture and political paraphrases, to reflect on collective trauma and memory, and to use irony.

Hetzel holds a degree in visual communication and arts from the Bauhaus University in Weimar and was a member of the electronic music band Pentatones for more than ten years. He started making theatre later because he started looking for artistic expression that would enable him to combine different interests and means of expression.

The one word that lingers after watching this performance is 'hope'. It would seem that the play is not really about hope, but about the hopelessness that is written into our history and our present, about how the world today is still moving forward from inertia, even though it is clear to everyone that this trajectory is leading to destruction. Yet, somehow, Hetzel manages to hook the living nerve of hope and pull it out to the surface, so that each of us would find the strength inside to reconstruct our vision of the world and break the inertia.

Artistic director of the festival
Kristina Savickienė

SIRENOS questions to Julian Hetzel:
What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?
Take a look at the graphic novel "Why Art" by Eleanor Davis.

What inspired your performance?
This piece started with a challenging question: how can we deal with the past in the present? If ideologies of the past are set in stone, they become a problem in today's world – like the statues of former leaders in public space. The only way to deal with the difficulties of the past is by working on, with and through the trauma, by taking it in our hands and by making it into material. We need no more monuments, what we need is movement.

Premiere: 2020
Duration: 70 min.
Dates: 29, 30 September | 19:00
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Black Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

Director:
Julian Hetzel
Co-creators and performers:
Kristien De Proost/Lisi
Estaras, Pitcho Womba
Konga, Jana De Kockere/
Simon Baetens
Dramaturgy:
Miguel Angel Melgares
Artistic advise:
Sodja Lotker
Production manager and
scenography:
Wim Clapdorp

Production assistant:
Valentine Galeyn
Assistant scenographer:
Pleun Verhees
Costumes:
Andrea Kränzlin
Technical management:
Piet Depoortere and Jonas
Lambrigts (Anne Meeussen,
Jannes Dierynck)
Coproductio:
Frascati Producties
Amsterdam (The
Netherlands), Standplaats

Utrecht (The Netherlands),
SPRING Festival Utrecht
(The Netherlands) and
Schauspiel Leipzig
(Germany)
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We Are Public, Kickstart
Cultuurfonds, the Flemish
Community and City of
Ghent

Partners of the performance in Lithuania:



Easy Things

Łatwe rzeczy

Teatr im. Stefana Jaracza w Olsztynie (Poland)



Photo: Wojciech Habdas

Premiere: 2021
Duration: 50 min.
Date: 1 October | 19:00
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Black Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)
N16

Director and dramaturg:
Anna Karasińska
Cast:
Milena Gauer,
Irena Telesz-Burczyk

Performance in Lithuania is
supported by:



Being watched is part of the acting experience. Being seen happens on stage but also off stage, it happens to anyone and everyone. In a subtle way, whether and how we are seen sets the boundaries of who we become and what is possible for us.

In *Easy Things*, the protagonist is the body in the role – an actress in the theatre and a woman in the world, subjected to various oppressions of seeing, including self-oppression. Irena Telesz-Burczyk and Milena Gauer reconstruct the shapes of their bodies and fates created under the influence of different gazes.

The performance gradually moves out of the classical theatrical situation into a performative one and triumphantly restores subjectivity to the performers and their bodies, allowing them to be seen beyond objectifying schemes.

Anna Karasinska is a Polish director of the middle generation, whose strength is the ability to speak sensitively, accurately, firmly about extremely fragile matters. Born and raised in Łódź, director simultaneously studied directing at the famous Łódź Film School and philosophy at the University of Łódź. Cinematography and philosophy always distinguish her works from others, as well as her creative methodology – she improvises with the actors, writes down the texts created while improvising and works with them until they turn into an essence, that actors can make part of their stage presence.

Easy Things is an incredibly sensitive performance about women. What they are like on stage, in life, next to men, in public, and alone at home. How they see themselves, how they evaluate themselves, how they talk to themselves, how they look at each other. On stage, you'll encounter two women from different generations, one of whom made history decades ago as the first woman in Poland to disrobe on stage. The text voiced by these women is unusually scarce, reverberating with repetitions, as if it were breathing with the viewer.

Artistic director of the festival
Kristina Savickienė

SIRENOS questions to Anna Karasińska:
What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

Instead of *understanding*, which immediately refers us to the intellect, I prefer to talk about experiencing. I always hope that the viewers will have an experience and create meanings and senses for themselves. For me, the closest association would be with the paintings of Francis Bacon and Maria Lassnig, and Stanley Kubrick's movie "Barry Lyndon".

What inspired your performance?

In each work, I start by looking at bodies, their organicity, brightness, liveliness in a dead and assumedly artificial and black theatre space.

It fascinates me that in dramatic theatre an actor, even though he is on stage, is physically absent rather than present. I can say that my goal is to find a way to human presence.

This time the subject of the show comes very directly from this – we worked with how the actresses treated and perceived their bodies and themselves and tried to overcome the narratives about themselves and their bodies that they encountered and internalized throughout their private and professional lives.

Encounters. Vilnius

Premiere: 2018
Duration: 90 min.
Date: 4, 5 October | 19:00
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Pocket Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

The show is suitable for blind and visually impaired

“Encounters. Vilnius” is supported by TINFO, financed by the Finnish Cultural Foundation

Idea and direction:
The Feminist Secret Society of Helsinki – Katri Naukkarinen, Amanda Palo And Olga Palo

Artistic collaboration and performers:
Vilma Raubaitė, Austėja Vilkaitytė, Livija Krivickaitė and Milda Naudžiūnaitė



The Feminist Secret Society of Helsinki (Finland)



Photos: Katri Naukkarinen

“Encounters. Vilnius” is a series of conversations, where the audience follows the meeting of two anonymous people taking place through performers. On stage there are two performers: borrowed bodies. These performers are connected via earphones and microphones to two anonymous participants who remain hidden from the audience and each other. The borrowed bodies repeat word by word everything the hidden participants say. The participants never meet each other, or the audience, face to face – the only interaction takes place on stage, through borrowed bodies.

What if facelessness is a way to more intimate communication? How can one represent another? Is representation the same thing as acting? What kinds of power relations form and interact between the audience, the performers, and the anonymous participants?

Authors of the piece say: „we believe that the performance concept transfers well to different contexts, because of its potential to find out what people are talking about in general, and what kind of things are on top of peoples’ minds. At the same time, the performance reveals conventions of the stage, performance, and theatre.”

The Feminist Secret Society of Helsinki (FSSH) is a collective of artists that makes performances and other outputs with varying lineups – both among its members and with visiting artists: actors Lida-Maria Iida-Maria Heinonen, Saara Kotkaniemi and Kreetta Salminen, multidisciplinary artist and researcher Katri Naukkarinen, director, playwright and author Amanda Palo, screenwriter, author and director Olga Palo.

FSSH has produced presentations, workshops, publications, exhibition installations and discussions, and acted as a supportive platform for its members. Their intellectual work is about feminist art making practices, with a special focus on collective work.

We are accustomed to seeing the people we interact with. We can draw numerous conclusions from their appearance, their facial expressions, their clothes – about their age, their social standing, perhaps their profession, and their education. But what does it feel like to interact with someone in complete anonymity, and at the same time live? When their words, conveyed through another person’s voice, reach our ears? As an audience, we are immersed in a conversation between two individuals who know nothing about each other, as they try to make sense of each other and the world through words. Poetic, real, improvised and different every day. I am delighted that this Lithuanian premiere of Encounters marks another successful collaboration with TINFO – Theatre Information Centre in Finland.

Artistic director of the festival
Kristina Savickienė

SIRENOS questions to FSSH:

What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

Hieronymus Bosch “The Garden of Earthly Delights” but seen through a secular lens; “Love is Blind” reality TV show; “Nirvana” song “Come as you are”.

What inspired your performance?

Social media; dating; conversational dynamics; message boards and online forums; bringing meta layers to the front; questions of freedom and responsibility; documentary theatre.

Blood Stories Lithuania

Mala Voadora (Portugal)
International theatre festival "Sirenos" (Lithuania)



Photo: Jonas Jurkūnas

Direction:
Jorge Andrade
Performance:
Jorge Andrade and Jonas Jurkūnas
Set design and costumes:
José Capela
Light design:
João Fonte ir Jorge Andrade
Production direction:
Cláudia Teixeira
Executive production:
Sofia Freitas
Communication:
Sara Cunha

Premiere: 2023
Duration: 90 min.
Date: 8 October | 19:00
Venue: Art printing house,
Black Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

"Blood Stories" is a biographical performance and continuous project, developed by a series of pairings of two artists. It is a series that we know how it begins, but we do not know how, nor when, it will end. Each pair will develop a new version of "Blood Stories" – a completely new show – based on the genetic data of each of the artists:

- Both artists take a DNA test.
- From their biological characteristics, they begin to know where their ancestors lived.
- They do historical research that they share online, thinking about how their histories may have crossed, may have intersected: migrations, trade routes that crisscrossed the world, colonialist rule, wars and empires, peace agreements, etc.
- They meet and organize *family dinners*, to which the local community is invited, but also scientists (historians, anthropologists, geneticists...), to help them discover their pasts. They'll talk about science as naturally as you ask the person closest to you to pass the wine or talk about yourself.
- Although this is a biographical show, to tell the story, to improve it and fill the gaps, both artists will fictionalize stories of love, betrayal, baby-swapping, family rivalries, long journeys. They will use personal and historical documents, as well as paintings. They will create fiction so that they can tell stories they know are true.
- The performance is presented. Its components – music, choreography, acting, etc. – will result directly from the specificity of the areas of the artists who will participate in each version.

For the "Blood Stories. Lithuania", SIRENOS invited the composer and researcher Jonas Jurkunas. His polyvalence will allow, in the artistic dialogue with Jorge Andrade, the „Blood Stories Lithuania“ to take on emotional environments and, simultaneously, by very diverse musical styles.

Jorge Andrade, founder of the "Mala Voadora" theatre in Porto, Portugal, is a director, actor, writer, and human rights activist. Born in Mozambique, he returned to Portugal at the age of four. His theatre reflects the different cultural experiences of his life, as well as his love for documentaries. However, in his documentary theatre, Jorge Andrade and his team always go beyond the usual boundaries of the genre, using a lot of dance and music, and adding imaginative scenarios to the facts. His performance "Mozambique", which was supposed to be performed in "Sirenos" in 2020, was cancelled due to the pandemic. Jorge then invited the festival to collaborate with his new work – "Blood Stories Lithuania".

Blood Stories is going to be an intriguing surprise for both our audience and the Sirenos team, as it marks the premiere of a unique collaboration between Portuguese and Lithuanian artists. I found Mala Voadora's proposal to collaborate, dive into the DNA of stories and find where the fates of people from two distant countries might have met very interesting. While it might seem that Lithuania and Portugal have little in common, it's astonishing to discover that DNA history transmits more information through blood than oral history and memory.

Artistic director of the festival
Kristina Savickienė

SIRENOS questions to Jorge Andrade (J.A.) and Jonas Jurkūnas (J.J.):

What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

J.J.: The backbone of the piece is the DNA research of director Jorge and myself, that will show our ethnic traces, and the dispersion of distant relatives all over the world.

For now, the work of J.L. Borges seems to be most relative.

J.A.: Angelica Dass' photography's.

What inspired your performance?

J.A.: I did a DNA test and was really surprised – and happy – by the results: a mix of DNA from very different parts of the world. I immediately wanted to explore DNA, mine and other artists', in a performance. It became a series of performances with different artists from different countries: Blood Stories.

J.J.: A few years ago, "Sirenos" asked me if I would be willing to collaborate musically with this Portuguese artist. I had no idea what direction the project would take. I bravely accepted the offer.

Text about text, i.e. silence

Teklè Kavtaradze

I am starting this text by listening to Kendrick Lamar's 'United In Grief' from his latest album *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers*, which I think is an example of what I would like to talk about. It is a whole, unique, powerful piece of work, and an important, very important part of it is the text, and/or the lack of text. It may be that today, starting with music, I want to talk about silence.

Returning to grief and the title of the song, could it be that we are here because we seek unity in our grief? To merge our griefs? To find a place, somehow, for what is most uncomfortable, most unpleasant, what stirs the deepest longing and sorrow? Something that makes it not just easy and fun to come to the theatre, to meet many people you know or meet no one, to know how and how much to speak, to be silent, to greet. More precisely, how do you maintain your centre, stay in your core, when you find yourself suddenly surrounded by people? Isn't this the reason we choose to venture beyond the waiting room? Because we know that beyond, there is silence, darkness, a pause, concentration on something else. Ahead lies the stage. That is how a return to oneself, a reunion with oneself, can happen. In an impactful piece. We go beyond the noise to return to silence. Then we return to the noise again, but with the hope of returning in a different way, or of being able to find our centre more quickly once we have become distracted again.

I have no doubt that we lost a lot before we got here. I have no doubt that when we come to see, to experience a new work, we hope to find something that will *push the button*. We are looking for a feeling, a memory, a thought, a recognition, a respite, tension and forgiveness, fear and complacency, a reminder – all of us united in grief. Sometimes a text can do that. A dialogue or monologue written by an author, lines improvised by the actors, quotations from other works, writings on the walls, on actors' shirts or socks, set details, lyrics, text in an app. Everywhere and everything. The text cannot sound, happen, or *press a button* without a relationship with silence. Isn't silence its most important condition? Colleague? Conspirator? Friend? Isn't it also the most important condition for creation, listening, and writing of a text?

For me, a coherent, impactful work will always be the one whose behind-the-scenes and process of creation is inseparable from respect – for the work itself, for the text, for every team member, and the environment. In this regard, the text is just one component of the whole, and it can lose its meaning when wielded out of fear, power, or the desire to lead, all the while forgetting that we are uniquely, but also vulnerably, united and forever linked by our experiences of grief. It is just hard to hear this without silence.



The Lithuanian Theatre Showcase at the Vilnius International Theatre Festival “Sirenos” has always served as a significant, if not the primary, gateway to the international market for many of the country’s performing arts professionals. With this pivotal role in mind, influenced by the festival’s extensive experience, the Lithuanian Theatre Showcase programme of the 2022–2023 season has taken shape. Its intended audience envisions an imaginary foreign curator arriving at “Sirenos” from Central or Western Europe, looking for captivating, distinctive content, extraordinary artistic language, unique themes and encounters, and intriguing cultural contexts that they could present in the festivals and theatrical repertoires they curate.

Currently, the international programme of “Sirenos” is shaped by choosing a different theme every year – this criterion is not mandatory for the Lithuanian Theatre Showcase. Nonetheless, my aim was to align with this year’s festival theme – the word – and discover its intersections with the material featured in the Lithuanian Theatre Showcase. This is how we move from words and the texts they form towards contexts – a deeper knowledge of them. For several pieces in the 2023 showcase programme, a more comprehensive and detailed presentation becomes necessary. These contexts include the country’s culture, traditions, historical experiences, current social issues, literary classics, and others. To expand the imaginary

target audience’s field of experience and to reveal and introduce various nuances of surrounding context, the program includes accompanying events in various formats.

With this small Lithuanian Theatre Showcase selection, compiled from more than 70 performances seen across the country, I have also sought to illuminate the fundamental trends shaping the evolution of our theatre, highlight its current developmental directions, and sketch out potential strategies for future collaboration. Over the past season, we’ve witnessed the younger generation of artists, particularly women, taking a more prominent and assertive stance on Lithuanian theatre stages – both physically and politically. Foreign guest directors, predominantly middle-aged or older men, have also played a significant role. The older generation of Lithuanian theatre luminaries, who are primarily men, have been deeply engaged in reevaluating their previous work or entering museum spaces as highly esteemed artefacts. This includes the notable transformation of Meno Fortas into a division of the Lithuanian Theatre, Music, and Cinema Museum, as well as the *Vilnius Poker* exhibition directed by Oskaras Koršunovas at the MO Museum.

The 700th anniversary of Vilnius is not forgotten either; “Sirenos” has been a part of 20 of these 700 years. Consequently, one of the key themes of the programme is dedicated to the cultural and historical contexts of the capital city. A small *fragment of*

lost & found awaits the audience as well: the festival caravan will move towards the Baltic Sea for one day, stopping here and there to explore interesting artistic and emotional experiences.

While my primary inspiration for shaping the programme was an imaginary foreign curator from a prestigious festival in Central or Western Europe, I would be delighted if our local audience, who are only able to see these performances individually outside the context of the festival, would consider following the curatorial trajectory of the festival and participating in the events of the Lithuanian Theatre Showcase. Although the challenges of the market and basic logistics have somewhat altered the poetry of the imagined concept, it is great that this year’s showcase is still infused with interesting work – often reflecting on the past, resonating with the present and prompting us to think seriously about the prospects of both the near and distant future.

Post scriptum

As I keep rethinking the programme of the Lithuanian Theatre Showcase, which reveals a certain glimpse of the 2022–2023 season and in some way represents the status quo of the country’s theatre, a nearly half-hour-long video by interdisciplinary artist Džiugas Katinas, which was published more than a decade ago on his personal YouTube account, comes to mind. It shows students of the

National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Art gathered in a small room at the school in 2000 watching the legendary semi-final basketball match between Lithuania and the United States at the Sydney Olympics. During that time, it felt like the whole country was collectively holding its breath. Lithuanians were gripped by an intense game where the national team managed to take the lead just 40 seconds before the match’s conclusion. However, it was a heartbreaking defeat as they narrowly lost to the Americans with a final score of 83 to 85, following a missed three-point throw in the closing moments. It is very interesting to observe the 12-year-olds in the video, witnessing their genuine reactions and their passionate and emotional support for their national team. It is equally interesting to recognise the faces of artists among these students, individuals who are now actively shaping the face of Lithuanian culture in the international context. It is just as intriguing to try and predict which emerging younger generation artists, who are gaining increasing prominence and influence on the Lithuanian theatre scene (and are nearly the same age as those basketball spectators), will rise as the future torchbearers of our theatre in the very near future.

Ana Ablamonova

Lithuanian Theatre Showcase

Barbarians

After J. M. Coetzee novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*

State Youth Theatre



Photo: Dmitrijus Matvejevas

Premiere: 25, 26 February 2023
Duration: 210 min
Date: 20 September | 18:30
Venue: State Youth Theatre
(Arklių str. 5)

Director:

Árpád Schilling

Cast:

Valentinas Masalskis,
Viktorija Kuodytė, Gediminas
Storpirštis, Martynas Berulis,
Aleksas Kazanavičius,
Jovita Jankelaitytė, Ina
Kartašova, Saulius Sipaitis,
Janina Matekonytė,
Vytautas Taukinaitis,
Kristina Andrejauskaitė,
Ieva Kaniušaitė, Dovilė
Šilkaitytė, Aušra Pukelytė,
Sergejus Ivanovas, Neringa
Varnelytė, Dalia Morozovaitė,
Giedrė Giedraitytė,

Lukas Petrauskas, Ignas

Ciplijauskas, Karolis
Kasperavičius, Matas
Dirginčius, Matas Sigliukas

Set and costume designer:

Renata Valčik

Composer:

Martynas Bialobžeskis

Light designer:

Eugenijus Sabaliauskas

Director's assistant:

Matas Makauskas

Translator:

Asta Paulauskytė

In the novel “Waiting for the Barbarians”, published in 1980 (in Lithuanian first published by “Baltos lankos” in 2013, and later again in 2021 – translated by Violeta Tauragienė), the story is narrated in the first person by the unnamed Magistrate of an anonymous Empire. The ageing man is seeking a quiet life away from Empire’s politics. He serves justice in a small frontier settlement on the land, taken away from peaceful indigenous nomads, and in his spare time fulfils his secret passions for women and archeological studies.

One day he is presented with a case against two “barbarians” – a father and his underaged daughter – captured by soldiers. The father is killed by soldiers in front of his daughter, while she is horribly tortured. This really throws the Magistrate off his usual track. Pity for the crippled girl transforms into paternal care, awakening feelings he has long forgotten. The Magistrate decides to bring the girl back to her people. He brings the fury and horrendous revenge of the faithful servants of the Empire upon himself because of this trip. The Magistrate becomes a beggar, fighting for his life and for a piece of bread. Finally, he witnesses the fall of the Empire, when army, sent into the wild to fight the “barbarians” doesn’t return and the town is abandoned...

It’s as if the novel is trying the boundaries of humanity and raises the question of who are the real barbarians: ruthlessly persecuted and tortured local nomads from the wild, farmers, fishermen and craftsmen or townspeople and militia, protecting the Empire and indifferent to their suffering?

Árpád Schilling believes that “in “Waiting for the Barbarians”, as in many of his other works, J. M. Coetzee primarily writes about his own experience in the Republic of South Africa, about Western empire of white people and its relationship with local black citizens, about colonial politics of the Western world in the Middle East, South America or Northern Africa. Today the war against the “barbarians” is led by the Eastern empire, today they are bombing houses and killing people. Although, it doesn’t matter whether we talk about West or East – every front line has its own frontier settlement, where ordinary God-fearing people live their ordinary lives, hoping that atrocities of war will somehow spare them, because they are honest impartial people. But nobody is impartial. Except maybe children. The town itself, townspeople are in the thick of action, when the conflict between the bloodthirsty Empire, seeking to conquer the barbarians, and an individual, resisting its cruelty – a typical intellectual.

And who are the barbarians? I have two hypotheses: either they don’t exist at all and this conflict is some sad ironic joke, or we all are barbarians, since we are all people.”

Lithuanian audience is very well familiar with works of Árpád Schilling. In the past two decades numerous performances of the Budapest theatre Krétakör, led by the director, earned the admiration of Lithuanian theatre goers. Árpád Schilling has also staged critically-acclaimed performances in the State Youth Theatre, Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, and Klaipėda Youth Theatre.

Schilling started directing when he was twenty years old and by 1995 established his own theatre Krétakör. Remembering the German theatre reformer Bertolt Brecht, the name Krétakör, meaning “chalk circle”, has captured the essence of his philosophy – one can connect theatre and the audience by enclosing them in a chalk circle, that can be drawn anywhere and in case it gets erased, it can be drawn anew right away. In more than a decade Krétakör has travelled the world and gained international recognition. Particularly successful Schilling’s productions “Wojtek”, “BLACKland” and “The Seagull” have gained him the title of one of the most original European Youth Theatre artists.

SIRENOS questions to Árpád Schilling:

What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

Albert Camus’ novel “The Plague” and Andrey Zvyagintsev’s film “Leviathan”.

What is more important: word or silence? Why?

I can’t give a definitive answer, it all depends on the context. Sometimes we need words, and sometimes – silence. Sometimes it doesn’t hurt to be silent while communicating, otherwise it can be difficult to understand the other person.

Are people born barbarians or do they become them?

We are all born barbarians. We are selfish, self-centred creatures, and the greatest challenge of our lives is to transcend this nature. It is empathy for others, solidarity, morality, and humility that saves us from the clutches of barbarism. Even if we are civilised, educated, and sophisticated, even if we lack gentleness and humanity, we are as barbaric as those who are stigmatised and marginalised daily because of their poverty and their primitive living conditions. People incapable of understanding the problems of those weaker than themselves and who, knowingly or unknowingly, but constantly abuse their dominance, are barbarians.

Life is a Dream

Pedro Calderón de la Barca

Premiere: 23 February 2023
Duration: 120 min.
Date: 21, September | 17:00
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Black Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

Director:
Gediminas Rimeika
Composer:
Agnė Matulevičiūtė
Set designer:
Oles Makukhin
Costume designer:
Sandra Straukaitė
Light designer:
Julius Kuršis
Choreographer:
Paweł Sakowicz
Sound operator:
Julius Janukaitis
Producer:
Rusnė Kregždaitė
Project coordinator:
Vaiva Gudaitytė
Technical manager:
Vladislav Bajaznyj
Cast:
Algirdas Dainavičius,
Laurynas Jurgelis,
Simonas Dovidauskas,
Aistė Zobotkaitė, Povilas
Jatkevičius, Vygandas
Vadeiša, Žygimantė Elena
Jakštaitė



Photos: Dainius Putinas



MMLAB (Meno ir mokslo laboratorija)

Hearing the prophecy that the sole heir to the throne – prince of Poland Sigismund – will bring misfortunes to his country and take over his father's throne, King Basilius imprisons his son in a tower. After reaching adulthood Sigismund is released from the tower and soon learns about his real ancestry. He faces the unfamiliar world, which seems to merely be a dream for him. It brings out the prince's darkest desires and awakens his greed and passion for ruling. If all of it is just a dream, is one still responsible for their actions?

In “Life is a Dream” by a distinguished Baroque author, Spanish playwright Pedro Calderón de la Barca, adventures entwine with philosophy, revenge, thirst for fame, love and intrigues. By interpreting this classical play creators of the production analyse the conflict between free will and destiny, delve into the contradictions of the existing reality and the one, that is being made up, as well as study the questions of justice and wisdom.

Director of the performance Gediminas Rimeika says: “This play delves into the fundamental topics, that have already become archetypes. These are thirst for glory, love, bloodline. Calderón portrays people burning with genuine passion and shows to what lengths they are willing to go in pursuit of their goals. This production is a fusion of classical and avant-garde theatre, giving audience a chance to drift into a dream, filled with intrigue, love, resentment and revenge”.

Gediminas Rimeika is known in Lithuanian theatre as both: an actor and a director. In 2010-2012 he studied theatre directing in Klaipėda University, in 2016 he graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (course led by Oskaras Koršunovas). After having played prominent roles in performances directed by Oskaras Koršunovas, Łukasz Twarkowski, Antanas Obcarskas, and Paulius Markevičius, Rimeika started directing himself in 2019. His directorial works can be characterised by attention to the actor, and openness for experimentation.

SIRENOS questions to Gediminas Rimeika:

What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

Akira Kurosawa's film “Dreams” – it is my favourite film, constructed out of five different dreams.

What is more important: word or silence? Why?

Word is sound, and silence, which consists of thoughts going around in our heads, is also sound, so there is no such thing as absolute silence. And yet, for me, the search for pure silence is more important, because there is so much noise around us.

At the beginning of last year's season, I was hoping to play a role without words, and that's what I got! It was a great experience to speak with my body and not with words.

What is society dreaming about now?

Everyone dreams about what they want the most, although I believe that now our society is dreaming of the end of war. I sometimes dream that Russia no longer exists, that it is replaced by a vast ocean, that you can take a boat from Latvia to Kazakhstan. It is, however, terrifying to imagine that some part of the continent simply no longer exists.

Fossilia

Lithuanian National Drama Theatre

Inspired by Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs *Lithuanians at the Laptev sea*

Premiere: 21 April 2023
Duration: 120 min.
Date: 21 September | 20:30
Venue: Lithuanian National
Drama Theatre, New stage
(Gedimino av. 4)

Director:
Eglė Švedkauskaitė
Text:
Dalia Grinkevičiūtė,
Eglė Švedkauskaitė,
Rasa Samuolytė, Darius
Gumauskas, Ugnė
Šiaučiūnaitė, Povilas
Jatkevičius, Vitalija
Mockevičiūtė
Scenography:
Ona Juciūtė
Costume design:
Dovilė Gudačiauskaitė
Composer:
Agnė Matulevičiūtė
Shell instrument author:
Elena Laurinavičiūtė
Light designer:
Julius Kuršis
Video projections:
Ieva Kotryna Ski
Choreography:
Erika Vizbaraitė
Dramaturgy mentor:
Anna Smolar
Producer:
Vidas Bizunevičius
Assistant director:
Kotryna Siaurusaitytė
Cast:
Rasa Samuolytė, Darius
Gumauskas, Vitalija
Mockevičiūtė, Povilas
Jatkevičius, Ugnė
Šiaučiūnaitė



Photo: Dmitrijus Matvejevas

Deportation of Lithuanians, families and individuals, to Siberia is one of our nation's most painful experiences, which director Eglė Švedkauskaitė analyses from a new perspective.

At the centre of the performance is a family of four. The son is studying cinema abroad and after receiving an assignment to make a documentary film he begins to research his family's history. The father is reluctant to share his memories, but after the family receives a call from the museum about the discovery of a manuscript by the father's aunt with recollections of the Siberian deportation, the family history begins to unfold on its own.

Although Švedkauskaitė creates a fictional family she also draws from real facts: in 1991, a jar was accidentally dug out at 60 Perkūno Avenue in Kaunas' Žaliakalnis district, where individual pieces of paper containing physician Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's memories from Siberia were found. The manuscript was thought to be lost because Grinkevičiūtė herself had tried to look for it several decades ago but with no luck.

"In this performance we aim to portray our desire as young people to talk as openly as possible with our parents, to analyse their experiences and how these experiences have affected us. We are seen as a therapeutic generation very keen to talk and resolve our relationship with our parents. It is probably quite natural that having grown up in a world of open sharing, democracy, and technology, we want to ask open questions, which is not to the liking of older people and sometimes even leads to confrontation. The relationship with parents is very important in this performance. That's why there are three generations in it: to analyse exile not as a disaster that happened to someone long ago, but as an intergenerational trauma that travels from one generation to the next," says the director of "Fossilia".

Director Eglė Švedkauskaitė attracted attention of Lithuanian theatre community with her first professional work "Man of Fish" (2020, State Youth Theatre). Over the past few years, by delving into the past of her homeland, its people, and the traces left on them by the history, she has established herself in contemporary Lithuanian theatre as a sensitive researcher interested in the topics of memory and identity.

SIRENOS questions to Eglė Švedkauskaitė:
What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's three-part memoir, collectively titled „Lithuanians at the Laptev Sea“, and Danutė Gaillienė's book „What Did They Do to Us: Life of Lithuania from the Perspective of Psychology of Trauma“.

What is more important: word or silence? Why?

Silence. Because if you look at someone who is silent, you can see how they really feel and what is happening to them. Silence is naked and there is nothing that could cover it. And then there is the very important silence that comes after many words have been spoken.

What kind of memory is the new generation of theatre makers creating?

A very difficult question. Neither in my work nor in my life am I interested in trying to predict the future, how something will be remembered. A quote by Julian Barnes comes to mind: "What you end up remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed".

Brave New Body

Corporate dystopia / probiotic ecotopia for voices

Premiere: 19 October 2022
Duration: 60 min.
Date: 22 September | 18:00
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Black Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

Script, action:
Žygimantas Kudirka
Music, action:
Arturas Bumšteinas
Action assistant:
Giedrė Kriaucionytė
Choirmaster:
Algimantas Kriūnas
Costumes:
Juozas Valenta
Graphic design:
Mindaugas Gavrilovas
VJ:
Vytautas Narbutas
Lights:
Julius Kuršis
Sound:
Ignas Juzokas
Cast:
Choir artists of state
ensemble "Lietuva" – Ilona
Pliavgo, Viktorija Šedbaraitė,
Rima Žukauskienė, Laura
Stančikaitė, Irena Kerulienė,
Gintarė Kulikauskytė,
Daiva Čepulionienė, Estera
Paukštytė-Penkaitienė,
Saulius Vasiliauskis, Zenius
Sakalauskas, Osvaldas
Petraška, Ramūnas
Juknevičius, Donatas
Kaikaris, Rokas Jasikas

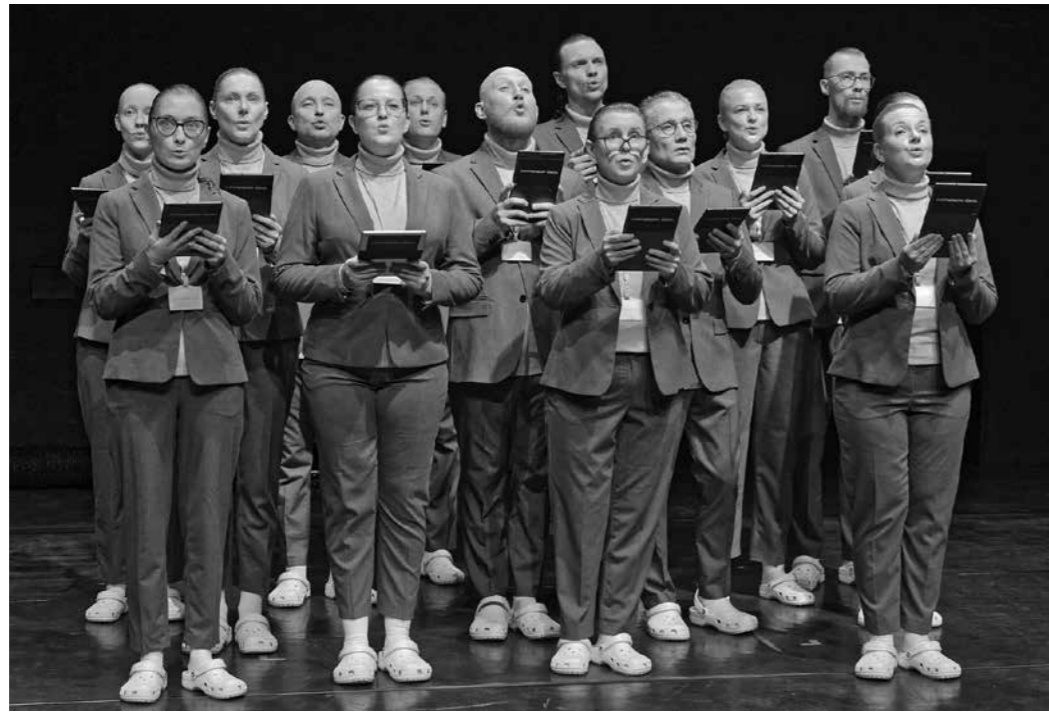


Photo: Martynas Aleksa

Having started composing music in his teens, composer Arturas Bumšteinas turned to performing arts much later. One of his first works that attracted attention from theatre community in Lithuania and abroad was "Bad Weather" (2017, Operomanija) – a performative sound art piece that uses baroque theatre noise machines reconstructed by Ernest Volodzka. Among the best-known theatre works of this author are the sound performance "Olympian Machine" (2018, Operomania), the musical theatre piece "Urbantschitsch Method" (2020, State Youth Theatre), and the corporate dystopia/probiotic ecotopia for voices "Brave New Body" (2022, Operomania), created with the artist Žygimantas Kudirka. Arturas Bumšteinas works in theatre not only as a creator of independent stage works, but also as a composer of music for performances.

Žygimantas Kudirka is a writer, artist, and performer. His works often take unexpected forms: alternate reality audio-guides, radio plays to be listened to inside cars, hacking into public media, or interactive solutions where the reader or listener has to complete the piece by themselves. The author has published a book of interactive poetry, seven music albums, performed hundreds of times in Lithuania and all over the world, created contemporary art and performance pieces.

Operomanija

Brave New Body is a result of an unexpected collaboration between two eccentric artists – composer Arturas Bumšteinas and artist Žygimantas Kudirka.

Combining social criticism, science fiction and absurd, this corporate dystopia for voices addresses the ever-problematic relation of human beings towards their bodies. Illusions rendered by diverse industries form unfounded expectations as to how we should look, while our presence on social networks results in an endless comparison of own body against numerous other bodies. Paradoxically, we often strive to be similar to non-existent, digitally altered body images.

Do not worry. Corporate dystopia will reveal a new technology allowing to transfer oneself into another body or the body of another. Hypnotic polyphonic songs *sutartinės* serve a kind of anaesthetic while lying under the "beauty knife", submerging into a dream invoked by deep sedation. You will see perhaps a vision, perhaps prophecy, where the humanity of the future finally finds a way to get rid of the ever unsatisfactory biological bodies and acquire "brave new" ones.

It seems to be the promised land where the souls soar free, acquiring any desired form. You have become a racing motorcycle and feel way sportier? You have turned into an air humidifier and your inner self is full of harmonious tranquility? Having transformed into most unexpected things and gadgets the souls celebrate their liberation from the old body, singing *sutartinės* about their new being. At first glance – it is a never-ending feast celebrating brave new bodies. And yet, what was it that encouraged to get rid of that unique, nearly miraculous biological body capable of curing its wounds and grow broken bones together?

SIRENOS questions to Žygimantas Kudirka:
What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

On the one hand, there are many science fiction novels and films that depict a possibility of transferring consciousness to another body as a vision of the future, but I am more interested in this storyline as a metaphor that helps to analyse our perceptions of identity and gender. Donna Haraway's "The Cyborg Manifesto" – which, like "Brave New Body", criticizes binary thinking and promotes a fluid, unrestricted self-identity – is comparable to our performance in this respect, and allows us to question anew what it means to be a human.

However, it should be kept in mind that in the performance these themes will be addressed by a fictional corporation that is offering a service of moving to the Brave New Bodies. So it is from their perspective that you will hear some uncomfortable truths, that, I hope, will provoke the viewer to come to the interpretation mentioned above.

Graham Harman's "Object-Oriented Ontology" may offer another way to see the performance. Like the book, "Brave New Body" denies human-centric hierarchical thinking and encourages us to look at the world from the perspective of a variety of objects, and develop a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness and autonomy of entities. What would air conditioner say about all this?

What is more important: word or silence? Why?

A word can be just a sound if there is no silence to soak it up.

On the other hand, the relationship between these two elements may be dictated by the genre of the performance.

Here, "Brave New Body" begins as a corporate dystopia. It is a staging of a futuristic corporate event, during which the viewer is plunged in an unsteady stream of information poured incessantly by dozens of voices and subtitled on a ten-metre LED screen.

Later, however, the work turns into a probiotic ecotopia – here, the pace slows down dramatically, the text becomes abstracted, and silence finds its place among the words.

All of this is connected by an intermediate form – transformed polyphonic music – *sutartinės*, which, on the one hand, do not let the silence to become prevalent, but also are slow and repetitive. It is not by pauses of silence, but by hypnotic repetitions that the listener is tucked into the fabric of the text.

What is the most dangerous function of a Brave New Body?

The greatest danger is that people with biological bodies will not embrace innovation, will radicalise, and turn into biosuprematists, perhaps even throw spanners in the works of Brave New Bodies. Or maybe the danger is that people Brave New Bodies will start to see everyone else as mere villagers.

The Metamorphosis

Based on the works of Franz Kafka

Premiere: 31 May 2023
Duration: 90 min
Date: 22 September | 19:30
Venue: Lithuanian National
Drama Theatre, New stage
(Gedimino av. 4)

Director:
Oliver Frlijić
Scenography, video
projections:
Igor Pauška
Costume design:
Morta Nakaitė
Light design:
Dainius Urbonis
Assistant director:
Augustas Gornatkevičius
Assistant for dramaturgy and
translator:
Eglė Poškevičiūtė
Producer:
Agnė Pulokaitė
Cast:
Rasa Samuolytė, Rimantė
Valiukaitė, Gediminas
Rimeika, Aistė Zobotkaitė,
Algirdas Gradauskas,
Kęstutis Cicėnas, Marius
Repšys, Rytis Saladžius,
Augustė Šimulynaitė, Vaidilė
Juozaitytė, Jūratė Vilūnaitė
(Balsas), Toma Vaškevičiūtė
(Miros balsas), Mira (Dog)



Photo: Dmitrijus Matvejevas

Lithuanian National Drama Theatre

“He can kill a man, but he cannot change him into something else” Robert Antelme

At the very heart of Franz Kafka’s work, one can always grasp the different forms of dehumanization being explored. The story of Gregor Zamza, the man-turned-insect, raises the question of the limits of our compassion for the Other: how the process of identification is carried out, how the Other is constructed, and whether we can accept the Other as a part of humanity. This performance seeks to explore the complex dialectical relationship between two different political (in the broadest sense) mechanisms: empathetic identification on the one hand, and dehumanization on the other.

The field of meanings in Kafka’s works is infinitely wide, and not amenable to simple, unambiguous interpretations. Striving to open different levels of them in the performance, the most important thing here is, however, to engage in a dialogue with the reality in which we live.

On 28 July 1914, the First World War broke out, and just a few days later, Kafka began to write what is perhaps his most famous novel, “The Trial” (which remained unfinished and was only published without the writer’s permission only after his death). And although the two events are not linked by mutual causality, the experience of war is evident in this and other works by the writer. Scholars of Kafka’s oeuvre argue that in “The Trial” he foresaw the totalitarian ideologies that were soon to engulf Europe, as well as the nature of that war. On 24 February, when Russia went to war against Ukraine, it was said that this war would initiate the next phase of European history, ushering in a new world order. So, it may well be that we, Europeans in the 2020s – like Kafka, who became a contemporary of the First World War – will live through a watershed epoch that will usher in a new world order.

Oliver Frlijić is one of Europe’s most prominent theatre makers, directors, actors, and text authors, often described by critics as a “theatre provocateur”. He usually raises difficult and socially unfavourable issues on stage, speaks sharply on social issues, and in his work, he often responds to the current problems and situations of the day. Several of his performances have had a significant public impact, such as his performance about anti-Semitism in Poland, which was cancelled at the National Old Theatre in Krakow in 2013, or “The Curse”, which was staged at the Powszechny Theatre in Warsaw in 2017. The director has been invited to work on various stages and is also in residence at the Gorki Theatre in Berlin.

SIRENOS questions to Oliver Frlijić:
What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

Jorge Luis Borges’ “The Universal History of Infamy”; Kurt Vonnegut’s “Hocus Pocus”; Zeno’s paradox of Achilles and the tortoise; Mark Z. Danielewski’s “House of Leaves”; Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet’s films based on the works of F. Kafka: “Class Relations” and “Jackals and Arabs”.

What is more important: word or silence? Why?

Silence because we tend to forget that words have meaning because of the pauses between them. Silence is also more important in Beckett’s trilogy (“Molloy”, “Malone Dies” and “The Unnamable”), where it says more than words. Paul Goodman also writes about the poetic power of silence in “Speaking and Language: Defence of Poetry”. He argues that it would be great if the whole world shut down for 20 years. Artaud made a similar suggestion in his vision of the theatre when he said that the word in the theatre should be banned for 20 years and only then would it make sense again. Certainly, when we think about our world, which is falling apart so quickly, the idea that in 20 years’ time there will be a person who can speak sounds very optimistic.

Does every animal deserve empathy?

Let me rephrase the question – do humans in general deserve empathy? I will answer with a beautiful quote from “The Laws of Manu”: “As many hairs as the slain beast has, so often indeed will he who killed it without a (lawful) reason suffer a violent death in future births”.

Guided

Arts Agency „Artscape“

Premiere: 13,15 June 2023
Duration: 60 min.
Date: 23, September | 10:30
Venue: Pravieniškės prison facility (Pravieniškių str. 5, Pravieniškės village)

* The performance may include uncensored language.



Photo: Martynas Norvaišas

Director:
Mantas Jančiauskas
Dramaturg:
Rimantas Ribačiauskas
Composer:
Andrius Šiurys
Executive producer:
Erika Urbelevič
Producer:
Aistė Ulubey

“Guided” was born out of creative workshops, that have been taking place in the Pravieniškės prison facility since 2021. During them, both director Mantas Jančiauskas and playwright Rimantas Ribačiauskas were working with twenty inmates.

By working on their newly invented genre of a *performative meeting*, the authors are looking for new forms of coexisting in theatre and trying to invent active, provocative, but also safe performance mechanics, engaging both inmates and spectators. During this performative meeting 10 inmates face 10 spectators for a dialogue, that none of the parties is prepared for in advance.

Today, approximately 6000 people in Lithuania are serving sentences in correctional facilities. It's one of the biggest numbers in Europe. Sooner or later most of them will walk free. Somewhere at the back of our collective mind there is a comforting belief, that a new changed man will walk out of a prison. By serving time he redeemed himself, learnt not to commit crimes and no longer has such intents. Although reality is often quite different. Words of a French philosopher Bernard Stiegler perfectly describe Lithuanian prisons – crime schools.

What can be done to make inmates want to and be able to change? Is the society, hoping for a safer world, ready to take a different look at the inmates?

Director of the younger generation Mantas Jančiauskas started his career exploring and critiquing contemporary consumer society. Soon he became interested in documentary theatre and turned his attention to people, and the influence of history and social environment on their lives. He works at the Lithuanian National Drama Theatre and OKT/Vilnius City Theatre, collaborates with Operomanija.

Rimantas Ribačiauskas has been working in theatre since 2013. In 2017 he started working as a dramaturg. His first work was a documentary performance “Green Meadow” (Žalia pievelė, directed by Jonas Tertelis) about the city of Visaginas and its inhabitants. Ribačiauskas is actively working with documentary materials, new methods of creative research and performance development.

SIRENOS questions to Mantas Jančiauskas (M.J.) and Rimantas Ribačiauskas (R.R.):

What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

M. J.: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's “The Gulag Archipelago” and Martin Buber's “I and Thou”.

R. R.: Robert M. Sapolsky's book “Behave”.

What is more important: word or silence? Why?

R. R.: Silence, because it is necessary for words, and words are not necessary for it.

M. J.: It seems to me that both words and silence are important. Or, rather, a combination of the two. A word without silence becomes an empty intonation. In silence and pauses, it gains more weight. Conversely, a pause has more weight when it is given a sense, conceptualised, and conscious. Because at the moment it is terribly difficult to find a silent spaces, for me personally, silence weighs a little more than word on the scales of importance.

Can justice system be fair?

M. J.: Justice as a phenomenon encompasses both philosophical-moral and legal-social aspects. The legal and moral foundations of it depend very much on the historical context and political ideology. Although the penal system itself is slowly being reformed, the attitude that the criminal should be punished rather than changed and rehabilitated is still present in the legal system since the Soviet times.

Facing a long imprisonment and punishment, one also faces a system which, due to the lack of officers and the architecture of the building itself (in the case of the Pravieniškės prison facility), maintains the presence of castes. In such a system, justice can be defined by the inmates themselves. Thus, a legal and systemic paradox arises. Where the justice system should be responsible for order, the prisoners are responsible for order. In this context, fairness in the justice system is highly questionable.

R. R.: It can be, but often is not.

Found Found Found

Inspired by works of Jonas Mekas

Premiere: 13 January 2023
Duration: 90 min
Date: 23 September | 15:00
Venue: Šiauliai State Drama Theatre (Tilžės str. 155, Šiauliai)

Director:
Naubertas Jasinskas
Dramaturg:
Dovilė Zavedskaitė
Composer:
Gintaras Sodeika
Set designer:
Eglė Kliučinskaitė
Video artist:
Ričard Žigis
Costume designer:
Dovilė Gudačiauskaitė
Lighting designer:
Dainius Urbonis
Choreographer:
Ieva Navickaitė
Assistant director:
Janina Kanapienė
Cast:
Martynas Baranauskas,
Tautvydas Galkauskas,
Alvydė Pikturnaitė, Monika
Šaltytė, Aistė Šeštokaitė



Photo: Eimantas Paulauskas

Šiauliai State Drama Theatre

“Found found found” is a performance by director Naubertas Jasinskas, born from a joint time with the creative team spent together exploring the phenomenon of Jonas Mekas, contemplating, reading, watching his works, experiencing it through his friends, his geography, and the philosophy of everyday life. The goal of the creative team is not to represent Mekas’ personality and ideas, but to live in his gaze, try to catch his pulse and create a unique world from this state. The audience is invited to experience the reality of the performance up close – the performance is observed in the very space of the stage.

The name of the performance came from the creators in order to answer the question of where the very essence of the method of Mekas, with which he studied the world, lies. The verb “find” in English means not only a simple “find”, but also a Mekas-like perception of the reality before us that is repeated thousands of times in everyday life. It’s like an effort not to take reality for granted, but to look at it with curiosity, almost with the vision of an archaeologist, and to rediscover every day what the surrounding life consists of. It is no coincidence that the word “found” is repeated three times: this is to emphasize that it is impossible to discover anything to the end, one can only detect something a lot of times and immediately forget again, lose it. Together, the creators of the play flirt with Mekas’s own film “Lost lost lost”: “We do not say that we discovered what Mekas lost in the film. We say that Mekas, who felt a little alien in the world, in all his creative expression really taught people to feel some kind of “found”. I found some feeling that here I am: my home, my man, maybe at least my dog or my river. Something,” says Dovilė Zavedskaitė, the dramaturg of the performance.

The sustainability of the performance is one of the director’s creative goals: “You want to apply sustainability ideas not only in the household, but also to take them to the stage. One of our creative conditions was to use as many items as possible that were no longer needed in the process, to create the foundation of scenography from them.” Therefore, architect Eglė Kliučinskaitė used wood, textiles and objects collected from different cities of Lithuania for the scenography of the performance. Costume designer Dovilė Gudačiauskaitė used old altar covers, curtains, fabrics to create costumes, which bring their memory to the stage.

Naubertas Jasinskas is a director of the youngest generation of theatre makers in Lithuania. He has directed productions at the State Youth Theatre, OKT/Vilnius City Theatre, Kaunas Chamber Theatre, National Kaunas Drama Theatre, and Šiauliai State Drama Theatre. His work is characterised by a distinctive, memorable form. The situation of the artist and the creative person in the contemporary world is important to the director as well. In his performances, Jasinskas is also interested in the topics of memory and history, in the creative process using materials that help to reflect on them.

SIRENOS questions to Naubertas Jasinskas:
What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

The most complementary price of art to the performance would be Jonas Mekas’ film “Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania”, which became a starting point for me and helped me to find a distinctive perspective and emotional narrative in creating “Found Found Found”.

What is more important, the word or silence? Why?

Definitely word. Observing the European context, I see the trauma of the Soviet era still haunting our society. Not only in my parents’ or grandparents’ generation, but also in my own: the captivity of the word is still present. We have not yet learnt to use words and language – sometimes we do not realise their social and political weight, we do not understand how the word can unwittingly become an instrument of psychological violence. For a very long time we were repressed and lived in silence, and to some extent we still do, but repressed no longer by power itself, but by reminiscence, by collective memory.

What kind of John Mekas did you find when creating the performance?

It seems to me that to name what we have found would contradict the very logic of Mekas. But I can share one thing that Jonas Mekas gave to the whole team and the creative process – the idea of positive theatre. We can hardly shake off the desire to see violence and abuse happening in front of us, but Jonas Mekas suggests to look at life as one beautiful, bright brushstroke.

Fragment

Klaipėda Drama Theatre

Based on the motifs of the third act of A. Chekhov's *Three sisters*

Premiere: 21 March 2023
Duration: 90 min.
Date: 23 September | 19:30
Venue: Klaipėda drama theatre,
Big Hall (Teatro str. 2, Klaipėda)

Idea, composition, production:
Dmitry Krymov

Producer:

Inna Krymova

Set designer:

Irina Komissarova

Light designer:

Eugenijus Sabaliauskas

Sound director:

Edvinas Vasiljevas

Artistic staging of video

projections:

Artūras Lepiochinas

Translator:

Gintaras Grajauskas

Set designer's assistant:

Anna Titova-Tubash

Assistant directors:

Alius Veverskis, Marius

Pažereckas ir Artūras

Lepiochinas

Cast:

Samanta Pinaitytė, Darius

Meškauskas, Regina

Šaltenytė, Toma Gailiūtė,

Sigutė Gaudušytė,

Digna Kulionytė, Jonas

Baranauskas, Mikalojus

Urbonas, Jonas Viršilas,

Artūras Lepiochinas, Karolis

Maiskis

Stage workers:

Antanas Razgauskis, Zigmās

Tarlovas, Darius Matevičius,

Linas Bagdonas, Rokas

Tomaševičius, Dovydas

Tertelis, Paulius Aleknavičius,

Rytis Veverskis, Simonas

Gyls, Marius Pažereckas



Photos: Domas Rimelka



Dmitry Krymov: “Our play is called ‘Fragment’. This fragment is from A. Chekhov’s play ‘Three Sisters’ – beginning of the third act – the night fire. In the center, as if under a magnifying glass, Olga, the eldest of the three sisters. In this dramatic piece of work: axon, fear, foreboding and struggle. The struggle is hopeless and perhaps not very successful – like all attempts by A. Chekhov’s heroes, including Olga – to defeat fate, which does not allow them to save the cherry orchard, become a writer or go to Moscow. They are doomed to fail. All that remains are the attraction to each other, suffering and loneliness. A. Chekhov is generally not concerned with the result but with the attempt itself, and that is what makes his characters so close and dear to us.

Regarding the question that may arise as to why I didn’t stage the wonderful play ‘Three Sisters’, I have the following remark: I once pointed out that when standing in front of a famous painting, I am interested in taking a good look at its parts, maybe even more than at the whole picture, so that, there, as if in a drop of water, I would discover the artist’s portrait and individuality. It’s a kind of a game. Theatrical game. And since in my opinion A. Chekhov is not sluggish and apathetic, but very energetic, bright and even fierce, the fire scene is the best for my game. Just relax and watch. And maybe you will sympathize and fall in love with these very recognizable people who can’t properly protect themselves, their love and their home.”

SIRENOS questions to Dmitry Krymov:

What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

I honestly think that we created something unique, so I don’t think that there is any other artwork that could complement the performance.

What is more important, the word or silence? Why?

The most important thing is a pause. If it’s the right length and used in the right place. In the silence of pauses, thoughts are born.

Our memory, thinking and even our daily lives are fragmented. Who or what can glue all these fragments together into a meaningful whole?

Only artists, of course. Without them, neither the pieces of memory nor the pieces of reality can make up any worthwhile picture.

Director, playwright and set designer Dmitry Krymov began his career in theatre as a set painter. He has designed the stage for more than 100 productions, including those of his father Anatoly Efros. After unexpectedly quitting the theatre, Krymov painted and created graphics. A decade later he returned to theatre to train future stage designers. It was while working with them that he started directing. Because of his opposition to the invasion of Ukraine, he is currently unwelcome in Russia and lives in the USA.

The Choice

Based on *The Choice* by Edith Eger

Premiere: 29 December 2022
Duration: 60 min
Date: 24 September | 16:00
Venue: Vilnius theatre "Lėlė",
Big Hall (Arklių str. 5)

Director, puppet artist:
Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė
Dramaturg:
Virginija Rimkaitė
Choreographer:
Sigita Mikaluskaitė
Composer:
Rita Mačiliūnaitė
Scenographer, costume
designer:
Julija Skuratova
Lighting designer:
Vilius Vilutis
Puppetry:
Virginija Pajarskienė, Gintarė
Vaivadaitė, Marius Vaitkus,
Justinas Šukaitis
Cast:
Sigita Mikaluskaitė, Deivis
Sarapinas, Lijana Muštašvilė,
Indrė Vėlyvytė, Eliza
Bondarenko



Photo: Laura Vansėvičienė

Vilnius Theatre "Lėlė"

"Memories are often fragments, brief moments or encounters, which together form the scrapbook of our life. <...> Memory is sacred ground. But it's haunted too." (Edith Eger, "The Choice").

During the Second World War, Edith Eger, her mother, father, sister, and other Jewish families were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. A ballet dancer and gymnast, she danced for Josef Mengele, also known as the Angel of Death. The belief that everything that was happening was only temporary, that soon she would be able to see her beloved one and parents, helped Edith to find strength and endure not only incomprehensible horror, cruelty, humiliation, dehumanization, exhausting work, hunger, diseases, the Road of Death, but also life *afterwards*: "When they liberated us, I was so weak I could not even speak, I could not move and only was lying in a pile of corpses. We became free, but we did not know what to do with that freedom of ours." Edith's parents were killed in a gas chamber. Her boyfriend was killed a day before the liberation.

It took several years for Edith to learn to forgive – not only others, but also herself. With this unique experience, she encourages all sufferers to face trauma and choose the freedom to escape from it: "You cannot change what happened, you cannot change what you did or what was done to you. But you can choose to live in the present."

In the performance inspired by Edith Eger's book "The Choice", through movement, dance, fragments of memories, puppets, it is sought to tell the story of a woman who saw the unfathomable cruelty of humanity with her own eyes, who hid the memories for many years and eventually realized that true freedom and true liberation from prison occurs only when she dares to return to the place from which so many have never returned.

Director Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė says: "I continue my duality journey. I am looking for a transformation of the *living* and *non-living*. A movement, a figure and a human being... Fragments of a human being, shells, and memories of a former life fly on the stage, which are only "fragments, brief moments or encounters, which together form the scrapbook of our life." We constantly live among them. They cover us, hinder us, and sometimes push us forward. I believe it is important to meet your ghosts, look them in the eye and let them go. To choose life and light".

Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė - director, artist, puppet maker, artistic director of Klaipėda Puppet Theatre. She is one of the most interesting contemporary Lithuanian theatre artists, distinguished by her authentic directorial ideas combining visual and movement art, constantly experimenting with storytelling methods and materials used for puppetry.

SIRENOS questions to Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė:
What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?
A survivor's memory...

What is more important, a word or silence? Why?
Silence. It is more eloquent than the word. But only pure, cleansed... true silence.

Is it better to live with the pain of remembering, or to forget and remain in a kind of numbness? Why?
To carry it with you. Pain grows and teaches us to embrace one another...

We cannot change the past, but we have a life that we can live now. To try to serve others, to do everything in our power. To be useful, to use ourselves to live and to blossom, to make the world a better place every moment.

The Silence of the Sirens

Lithuanian National Drama Theatre

Premiere: 15 June 2022
Duration: 105 min
Date: 24 September | 18:00
Venue: Lithuanian National
Drama Theatre, Small stage
(Gedimino av. 4)

Director:
Laura Kutkaitė

Dramaturgy:
Teklė Kavtaradzė and Laura
Kutkaitė, in collaboration
with the cast

**Scenographer, costume
designer:**
Paulina Turauskaitė

Composer:
Agnė Matulevičiūtė

Choreography:
Laura Kutkaitė

Choreography consultant:
Agnietė Lisičkinaitė

Light design:
Vilius Vilutis

Assistant director:
Urtė Sėjūnaitė, Augustas
Gornatkevičius

Assistant dramaturgy:
Simona Jurkuvėnaitė,
Eglė Poškevičiūtė

Producer:
Rugilė Pukštytė

Cast:
Gerda Čiuraitė, Rimantė
Valiukaitė, Toma
Vaškevičiūtė, Aistė
Zabotkaitė, Jūratė Vilūnaitė



Photo: Dmitrijus Matvejevas

The sirens are singing – beautifully, writes Homer. They sit on an island, lure men onto land and then kill them. Except for Orpheus, who sings louder, and Odysseus, whose companions stuff wax in their ears and have him tied to the mast so that he can listen to the sirens without dying.

European mythology is dominated by violence: between people, gods, mythical creatures and the sexes. Inequality and power imbalances produce fears and defence strategies instead of relationships. What makes us hold on to these structures?

Working with her collaborators, director Laura Kutkaitė puts a contemporary story right in the middle of the mine field of myth: four years after the highpoint of the #MeToo movement in Lithuania, she puts the issue of abuse of power in the arts world on the stage. Posing on a rock, four female actors open their island theatre and tell true stories from their working life, while waiting for “the great Odysseus”. They leave no dark detail out – not even the competition between them – and at the same time perform theatre: in costume and makeup, with sound and light, with bitter humour, passion, vulnerability and plenty of reasons. In this way they strike the structures exactly where they could change.

Laura Kutkaitė is a theatre director of the youngest generation of Lithuanian theatre makers. Before turning to theatre, she studied choreography and philosophy. The body, physicality and the interaction of bodies on stage is probably the most important topic for her. Kutkaitė’s work also deals with issues of social gender, exclusion, and identity.

SIRENOS questions to Laura Kutkaitė:

What text or piece of art would help to better understand your performance?

Although we have only used the siren motif from the “Odyssey”, I would suggest reading the whole epic from a new perspective. Note, how Penelope is told to keep her mouth shut while her husband travels the islands without remaining faithful. The attempt to silence women is as old as this literature. So, rather than another artwork, my “The Silence of the Sirens” would be complemented by a wish to notice who is allowed to speak and when, who is and is not listened to. One can understand a great deal about one’s environment from this.

What is more important, the word or silence? Why?

This is essentially a metaphysical question, but I will briefly share my thoughts in the context of the performance. I really like Rebecca Solnit’s idea that “Silence is the ocean of the unsaid, the unspeakable, the repressed, the erased, the unheard. It surrounds the scattered islands made up of those allowed to speak and of what can be said and who listens.” It is about privilege, about authority, about “geniuses”, as we call them in “The Silence of the Sirens”.

However, what is more expressive for me on the stage is the silence, filled with what is unspoken, not fully revealed. This helps to stimulate spectator’s imagination. And this is what I consider to be my job as a director – to find silences like this and, together with the actors, fill them with the appropriate tension.

Which is more dangerous – the song of the sirens or their silence? Why?

I hope that everything the sirens (in this case, women telling their story) do is and will be dangerous. And the songs sung from the stage will sink more than one ship, publicly or privately.

Once upon a Vilnius

Film screening accompanied by live music

Duration: 23 min
Date: 21 September | 22:30
Venue: OPERA Social House
(J. Lelevelio str. 4)



23-minute-long documentary film “Once Upon A Vilnius” is assembled from 80 hours of footage that the cameraman and director Eitvydas Doškus filmed over five years. Noticing the rapid changes of the city, he aimed to capture and preserve important places, city rituals, and people for future generations.

The film is a symphony of a city as it uniquely reveals the authentic features of Vilnius’ face and their transformations, with special attention given to the music played in it. Screenings of the film are often accompanied by live music performed by the composer duo Vygintas Kisevičius and Paulius Kilbauskas, who have made a significant mark on Lithuanian pop and alternative music scene. The duo is known for their work with legendary musical phenomena such as the bands “Empti” and “Kurak”.

Director, screenplay, cinematography:
Eitvydas Doškus
Editing:
Ignė Narbutaitė ir Eitvydas Doškus
Music:
Vygintas Kisevičius ir Paulius Kilbauskas
Colorist:
Jonas Sunkloda
Producer:
Dagnė Vildžiūnaitė

Eitvydas Doškus is a film director and cinematographer. He graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in 2010. In 2016, he received the Sidabrinė gervė statuette for the best cinematography of the year at the Lithuanian Film Academy Awards, and in 2022, he won the main prize at the Lithuanian Cinematographers’ Union Awards for his film „Once upon a Vilnius“.

“Meno avilys”

Vilnius poker

Art exhibition dedicated to 700th anniversary of Vilnius

Venue: MO Museum
(Pylimo str. 17)

Photo: Rytis Šeškaitis



List of Artists:

Valentinas Antanavičius (1936), Žygimantas Augustinas (1973), Arūnas Baltėnas (1956), Aidas Bareikis (1967), Kostas Dereškevičius (1937–2023), Antanas Dubra (1987), Nerijus Erminas (1976), Vincentas Gečas (1931–2020), Kęstutis Grigaliūnas (1957), Almantas Grikevičius (1935–2011), Marius Ivaškevičius (1973), Evaldas Jansas (1969), Matas Janušonis (1994), Vytautas Kalinauskas (1929–2001), Tauras Kensminas (1991), Dainius Liškevičius (1970), Vitas Luckus (1943–1987), Gintaras Makarevičius (1965), Ieva Martinaitytė-Mediodia (1968), Rimantas Milkintas (1977), Orūnė Morkūnaitė-Gibavičienė (1972), Henrikas Natalevičius (1953), Audrius Novickas (1968), Raimondas Paknys (1954), Liudas Parulskis (1971), Igoris Piekuras (1935–2006), Artūras Raila (1962), Eglė Rakauskaitė (1967), Eglė Ridikaitė (1966), Marija Teresė Rožanskaitė (1933–2007), Šarūnas Sauka (1958), Mindaugas Skudutis (1948), Raimundas Sližys (1952–2008), „Solo Ansamblis“, Rūta Spelskytė (1985), Aloyzas Stasiulevičius (1931), Algirdas Steponavičius (1927–1996), Arvydas Šaltenis (1944), Šarūnas Šimulynas (1939–1999), Vytautas Tomaševičius (1972), Teodoras Kazimieras Valaitis (1934–1974), Romanas Vilkauskas (1949–2018), Mikalojus Povilas Vilius (1944), Kazimiera Zimblytė (1933–1999), Gintaras Znamierowski (1970), Gediminas Lapė (1966), Algimantas Kunčius (1939), Paulius Kilbauskas (1976), Eugenijus Sabaliauskas (1973).

Exhibition Director:
Oskaras Koršunovas
Scenographer:
Gintaras Makarevičius
Curators:
Dovilė Barcytė,
Algė Gudaitytė
Exhibition Designer:
Liudas Parulskis
Exhibition Composer:
Antanas Jasenka
Consultants:
Jūratė Čerškutė, Laima Kreivyte, Gintautas Mažeikis,
Kasparas Pocius, Almantas Samalavičius, Vladimiras Tarasovas

Ričardas Gavelis’ book “Vilnius Poker” is up to this day referred to as one of the most important texts written in and about Vilnius. For many this book has become a symbol of liberation from the Soviet era and a symbol of creative freedom, that deconstructed the Soviet reality, and was not afraid to have an opinion about jazz, architecture, arts, urban anthropology and multiculturalism.

The novel is set in the late Soviet era, which is the time of the most vibrant work of the authors who make up the bulk of the MO Museum’s collection. Therefore, the social, political and cultural issues of the time, as well as the life of the city of Vilnius and its inhabitants, are reflected in the artists’ works. The MO Museum collection also includes art that was ideologically unacceptable in the Soviet Union. It is also one of the many themes linking the collection to the exhibition.

In the exhibition, director Oskaras Koršunovas, artist Gintaras Makarevičius and curators Dovilė Barcytė and Algė Gudaitytė pose the question – what kind of a character is Vilnius nowadays, and as what kind of character do we imagine it in the future?

With his critical, sharp and topical works, internationally renowned Lithuanian director Koršunovas staged his first play “There to be Here” in Vilnius in 1990. This play started a completely new phase in the history of Lithuanian theatre and reflected the reality of the time of Gavelis’ “Vilnius Poker” through the lens of absurd.

Published in 1989, Gavelis’ “Vilnius Poker” is not only a comprehensive deconstruction of the collapsing Soviet system, but also one of the first Lithuanian books dealing with the city and its citizens. Vilnius is one of the most important characters here. Through the prism of the city, the novel reveals the search for national and cultural identity. There is no single truth, no single storyline or answer, which is why Vilnius Poker can be considered one of the first works of postmodern Lithuanian literature.

text means anything, text means nothing

Jānis Balodis

My position towards text in theatre that I try to do is double sided. I have worked and I still do work in situations where a written text (a play) is asked and is needed as a starting point before the rehearsals start. At the same time theatre is not a text. I am still curious to understand the ways how to start to build theatrical setup that doesn't take text as a starting point. Regarding this, the key word for me here is a word "setup" – a theatrical setup or I would prefer to use a term performative setup. As a term suggests "something that has been set up", in this case a performative situation. Everyday life consists of performative setups. A well written play sets up a performative situation. "Artist is present" by Marina Abramovic is a performative setup where she was present at the Museum of Modern Art for 736-hour and 30-minutes sitting immobile in the museum's atrium while spectators were invited to take turns sitting opposite her. **Sitting down in theatre, facing a stage and paying atten-**

tion to what happens on the stage (unspoken agreement is not to disturb the show) is a performative setup. I can say I don't have a problem with the former performative setup but for some reason I am curious what else theatre could be? What else theatre could do? And I assume that to understand that, I am trying to learn the ways and tools that would help to think of performative setup that is not entirely rooted in text. To formulate it in other words – to think more about what happens between an audience member and a performer/actor. What kind of spectatorship is being activated? Where is the stage located? What is at stake (in reality and in fiction)? And how is the performative setup mirroring the content, theme or questions of the material?

Published in: „Contemporary Latvian Theatre. A Decade Bookazine“,
ed. Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča, Riga: Latvian Theatre Labour Association, 2020, 154 p.

club

Opening of the festival Concert of “Garbanotas”

Date: 22 September | 21:00
Venue: Trakų Vokė Manor (Žalioji a. 2A)

Interview with Šarukas Joneikis, the vocalist and one of the founders of the band „Garbanotas“:

Agnė: Hi Šarukas, I'm going to ask you some questions about this year's festival. The first is quite a general one – have you been to the festival and what does “Sirenos” mean to you? What do you associate it with?

Šarukas: I have been, and I usually find out about it through friends and go to performances based on their recommendations. Theatre folks truly craft beautiful works, they get the message across. What I love most about it is the name itself – “Sirenos”. I associate it with the sirens that used to lure sailors to the island with their voices; in general, a voice that announces, entices, shouts, an audible sign that draws attention; and the message of the festival also reaches me through the voices of my friends.

A.: The theme of “Sirenos” this year is “the word”. Tell us briefly what the words, the lyrics in the music of Garbanotas mean to you, what does the current festival theme relate to, what could it mean? Do you have a favourite line from the band's song? Or is there one you would like to change, that you don't like at all today?

Š.: In the music of Garbanotas, the text is a very important element, and a word is a powerful tool to tell stories, to speak, to establish an understanding with the audience and, of course, with oneself. For me, words are important because you can use them to let go, to live an experience, and when you add sound, you get a discharge. Words help you to connect more clearly with people, though you can actually speak without them, but that's what makes us different from nature, from other animals – we have the power of words for communication. The word (especially when spoken by a creator) is the beginning of everything and, at the same time, a symbol which carries the experiences of many years of humanity. And my favourite line... I don't know, I'm thinking now, maybe the song ‘Sapne’ (‘In a Dream’), from our latest album *Kūno dangaus (Body of Heaven)*: ‘The word dies when it becomes flesh, will it rise again from our

lips?’ It is strong for me because it talks about a common language, about trying to listen, to understand, so that the body can live. And to change... I never thought I would like changing any lines. Although actually I often change while performing the songs live. I do change the words according to the feeling I'm having, or even to the mood of the day.

A.: Have you ever played at a theatre festival? And at Trakų Vokė Manor? From your perspective, what role does the concert venue play? Or does it matter at all?

Š.: We haven't, but I know that beautiful mansion. The venue determines a lot and influences the repertoire of the performance, both sonically and dynamically: the dramaturgy of the performance changes, simply according to the mood of the space. This is very important.

A.: What is your favourite Lithuanian word?

Š.: What a funny question. I once thought that if someone asked me what my favourite Lithuanian word was, it would be an interesting interview, so it's great that we talk about it. Back then, my answer would have been *baletas* (ballet) or *balerina* (ballerina). And it sounds beautiful, and I immediately see such feminine grace and movement. But now, when I think of a more Lithuanian one, the mysterious *ūkana* (mist) sounds fun.

In a little more than a decade, “Garbanotas” has become an important and influential part of Lithuanian music scene. Their music is described as a multi-layered blend of rock, blues and psychedelic rock and is familiar to almost everyone interested in Lithuanian alternative scene.

The band has already released six studio albums: “Venera” (2012), “Above Us” (2015), “Room for You” (2017), “Paskutinė saulė” (2018), “Heart in a Plastic Bag” (2022) ir “Kūnas dangaus” (2023). The latest, released at the beginning of this year, is a delicate collection of light music and poetry, which has already attracted a lot of attention from listeners, music professionals and reviewers. It features texts in Lithuanian by Mantas and Šarūnas Joneikis from “Garbanotas”, as well as by poets Marius Lucka and Paulijus Širvis.

The band's songs in Lithuanian and English, concerts and performances promote Lithuanian alternative music both in their homeland and abroad.

Lithuanian Theater showcase awards

The event is organized by the creative team of the performance “Memoirs of a Young Man”

Date: 24 September | 21:00
Venue: OPERA Social House (J. Lelevelio str. 4)

Interview with director Eglė Švedkauskaitė:

Agnė: I'm starting the recording.

Eglė: Ok.

A.: So, Egle, what can one expect from this year's awards ceremony?

E.: In fact, we are working on it with the “Jauno žmogaus memuarai” (Memoirs of a Young Man) performance team, because we were awarded at this event last year. We are also organising an appreciation evening, and together we would like to show what we have been recognised for. Music is the eleventh character of our play (with ten actors on stage), on that occasion we are gathering at the Opera Social House, where this character will be most active. We will be performing pieces by DDN (Didžioji Dievo Neteisybė [The Great Injustice of God]).

A.: Is it the name of the band in the performance, with the masterfully playing actors?

E.: Yes. Together, we will escort those who will receive the awards this year to the celebration.

A.: And immerse ourselves in our created interpretation of Gavelis' world. Me, as a member of the performance team and the composer of the music...

E.: Yes, answer the question, Agnė (laughs).

A.: ...I can say that there will be a lot of really good music and the actors will not only play live on stage, but also choose the repertoire for the dances. So it's not just the awards and the concert, but also a really fun party. And did you enjoy getting the “Sirenos” prize?

E.: I certainly did. Especially because it's given by people who are not very familiar with the local context, which means that they appreciate what they see on stage.

A.: Since you didn't win a statue, but an instrument called a theremin, I'm curious – when do you use it?

E.: It has become an entertainment at my home. Everyone can get acquainted and play such an unusual instrument.

A.: It sounds very eco-friendly: it's not just an award-object that takes up space on a shelf or that you put in a drawer. It's nice when you can integrate it into your everyday life, your art, your leisure time, and open up your musical abilities.

Last question – what is your favourite Lithuanian word?

E.: If I can say two, then vanduo (water) and vaizduotė (imagination). If it has to be one, then it's vanduo.

Jumpcore

Dance performance

Zachęta National Gallery of Art

Premiere: 8 December 2018

Duration: 40 min

Date: 6 October | 20:30

Venue: Arts Printing House, Black Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

Choreography and performance:

Paweł Sakowicz

Dramaturgy:

Mateusz Szymanówka

Music:

Indecorum

Costume:

„Doom 3k“

Production:

MAAT Festival, Scena Tańca

Studio, Zachęta – National

Gallery of Art

The presentation of the performance in Lithuania is supported by:



Interview with choreographer, dancer Paweł Sakowicz:

Agnė: Hi, Paweł. I will ask a couple of questions. So, first, why is it important for you to perform in Vilnius? And in “Sirenos” festival?

Pawelas: I worked for three theatre productions in Vilnius, my really close friends live here – Vilnius became an important place. Also, I haven’t really performed my own works until this autumn. So, performing at “Sirenos” will feel very special.

A.: Topic for “Sirenos” festival this year is “word”. In your performance - do you use words? What language do you speak: conceptual, body?

P.: I sing one song while jumping. Except that, it’s just a physical laboratory on one specific figure: the jump. So, I’d say this is the word: “the jump”. I go through the history of how different dance styles use the jumping; I mix it with my own bouncing routines. While dancing, I dream about a jump that is so stretched in time that it never actually lands.

It is not entirely clear if Fred Herko planned to finish his intimate performance with a suicide.

He took a bath, turned on Mozart’s Coronation Mass and began to dance naked in his friend’s living room. He approached an open window several times. When Sanctus resounded, he ran and jumped out the window of the apartment on the fifth floor of New York’s Cornelia Street.

Ballet dancers are said to believe they can fly. And indeed, suspended for a second in a jump, they do.

Choreographer and dancer Paweł Sakowicz often collaborates with theatre and film directors. He graduated from the University of Warsaw with a degree in Political Science and holds an MA in Performance and Choreography from the London School of Contemporary Dance. His main artistic interests are dance history and cultural appropriation in choreography.

A.: How many times you performed “Jumpcore”? Can you tell me shortly how it shifts through time?

P.: It’s probably the work that I toured the most, I would say I performed it at least 30 times. It was performed in white cubes and traditional black boxes, outside in the parks and city squares. Although the choreographic score is set and pretty strict, each show feels a bit different. The piece is physically demanding so one day it feels just good, another time I can’t wait to finish and leave the stage.

A.: What is your favourite Lithuanian word?

P.: Vakarėlis (party).

This year marks history: for the 20th time, “Sirenos” are roaring and beckoning. And alongside the international and national programmes, the Sirens Club: an integral part of the festival, without which I can hardly imagine its atmosphere, festivity, creative experiments, and playfulness. It is an important thread of the festival – a platform that enables artists to propose and show experiments. Finally, it is a place where there will always be room to talk and think about art. And to go beyond theatre. When performance is not enough.

In the “Sirenos” Club educational programme, we invite you to take a closer look at the Swiss artist Milo Rau. After the performance “La Reprise. Histoire(s) du théâtre (I)”, you will be invited to see two of his films: “The Family” and “The New Gospel”. Milo Rau is not a comfortable creator. Sometimes when watching his works, I catch myself raising an alarm in my head: is this allowed? Is this ethical? These are also the thoughts that came to mind while watching the above-mentioned works. Both are sad – about death and migration. But when you see them, you change your perspective: you realise that the author deliberately chooses themes that are, at first glance, uncomfortable and unattractive. How interestingly he juxtaposes what seem to be completely opposite poles: sadness, mourning and beauty are always somewhere close by. These are shocking but also cathartic creations. I promise, after watching “The Family” and “The New Gospel”, you’ll be replaying the events in your head. The ones you have just witnessed, and the ones that were forced out of your lives. Twice in the club programme, we will also invite you to meet Milo Rau live.

Somewhere here in the educational Club programme appears tangible word. It is a powerful tool in the “Sirenos” Club, because all the discussions, opinions and meetings, are impossible without words. It is the word that will spark the international discussion “Who is the author of the text?” about a question that is becoming more and more sensitive in the theatre. It will be attended by a joint company

of foreign and Lithuanian directors: Milo Rau, Anna Karasińska, Eglė Švedkauskaitė and Naubertas Jaisinskas. This discussion developed during the planning of Anna Karasińska’s workshop for performing arts professionals, which will take place in the first days of October, when we realised how inexhaustible this topic really is. Anna’s workshop will focus on personal experiences and the text that is created for the theatre stage through them.

We will also have a separate meeting with director Milo Rau, with whom theatre scholar Alma Braškytė will discuss not only the live performance and two videos seen in this year’s programme, but also his famous manifesto, formulated and written while working at “NTGent”. The word will also accompany the discussion that will follow the performance “Encounters. Vilnius”, where it is at the very heart of the performance.

We will literally give a nod to another discussion that is very important to us, organised together with the Goethe-Institut in Vilnius – “Memories in Urban Space”. It will ask: what positions of power do monuments emphasise and who are they talking to today? What remains invisible in the urban fabric? We developed the idea based on the international programme’s performance “Mount Average”.

This map of experiences will be waiting for you at Club of the 20th edition of “Sirenos” festival. These are the colourful margins of theatre. Pulsating and improvising. They bring the community together; they allow us to speak and to break free.

Personally, I find these margins the most interesting. Because they are unique. And wide. Beyond theatre.

I invite you to be and explore together!
Ugnė Kačauskaitė

The Family

Film

Premiere: 2021
Duration: 90 min.
Date: 1 October | 16:00
Venue: Art printing house,
Pocket Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

Direction:

Milo Rau

Cast:

An Miller, Filip Peeters,
Leonce Peeters, Louisa
Peeters

Dramaturgy and research:

Carmen Hornbostel

Assistance dramaturgy:

Eline Banken

Coach:

Peter Seynaeve

Light design:

Dennis Diels

Set and costume design:

Anton Lukas, Louisa Peeters

Musical arrangement:

Saskia Venegas Aernouts

Production:

„NTGent“

Coproduction:

Romaeuropa Festival,
Künstlerhaus Mousonturm
(Frankfurt), Théâtre de Liège,
Schauspiel Stuttgart, Scène
Nationale d'Albi

With support of:

Tax Shelter maatregel van de
Belgische Federale Overheid



In 2007 in Calais, a whole family hanged themselves: the parents and their two children. Never a motive was found, the suicide note stated: “We messed up, sorry.”

In “Family”, the first part of Milo Rau’s Trilogy of Private Life, we see a real family on stage: actors An Miller and Filip Peeters do not only act together as a couple, but for the first time in their career they are on stage with their two teenage daughters Leonce and Louisa – and their dogs. Fiction and reality mix, as we see in front of us an evening like many in families – only that it is the last one. We watch a family while they eat, shower, learn English, watch videos. We see them talking about everyday things, making phone calls, listening to music, cleaning up the apartment, remembering moments of their lives. And in this exhibition of the normal, the big questions arise: Why are we here? Why am I here? And wouldn’t it be better if we would disappear?

Family is an experiment, an ethnological study of today’s private life, an exhibition of the everyday.

The New Gospel

Film

Premiere: 2020 m.
Duration: 107 min.
Date: 2 October | 16:30
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Pocket Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)



Director, author of the

screenplay:

Milo Rau

Cinematography:

Thomas Eirich-Schneider

Editing:

Katja Dringenberg

Sound:

Marco Teufen, Julian Joseph

Sound design:

Dieter Lengacher,
Guido Keller

Narrator:

Vinicio Capossela

Music:

Vinicio Capossela,
Elia Rediger, Ras Bamba

Involved TV Channels:

ZDF/ARTE, SRF/SRG SSR

Production:

Milo Rau/IIPM, Fruitmarket,
Langfilm

What would Jesus preach in the 21st century? If he lived today, what people would he fight for? Who would his apostles be? In “The New Gospel” Milo Rau and his team return to the origins of the gospel.

The protagonist of “The New Gospel” is the Cameroonian activist Yvan Sagnet, the first black Jesus in European film history. In 2011, he himself works on a tomato farm when he starts to revolt against the exploitation of rural workers in the south of Italy. For this film, he revisits the largest refugee camp near Matera, the city in the south of Italy where Pier Paolo Pasolini and Mel Gibson previously shot their films on the life of Jesus. Sagnet finds his apostles in the camp. Together they set up the “Rivolta della dignita”, the Revolt of Dignity.

Meeting with director Milo Rau

After the screening of “The New Gospel”, please join us for a conversation with Milo Rau. The director will be interviewed by theatre scholar Alma Braškytė.

Date: 2 October | 18:20
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Pocket Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

Discussion: Memories in Urban Space

Participants: the creative team of Julian Hetzel’s “Mount Average” (Germany-Belgium)
Moderator: Rasa Antanavičiūtė

Cities have memory: we can read centuries of change in architecture and public spaces, marked with monuments for past victories or defeats; history is remembered and created by the streets and the people who walk them. Who decides which part of the past or which person deserves to be remembered, and which will remain invisible? Whose fates do monuments and street names speak of? What positions of power do they highlight and to whom do they speak today? How does the toppling of a monument or renaming of a street change our perception of urban space?

Date: 30 September | 17:00
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Pocket Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

The discussion is organised in cooperation with the Goethe Institute.

Discussion: Who is the author of text?

Participants: Milo Rau, Anna Karasińska, Eglė Švedkauskaitė. Moderator: Naubertas Jasinskas

In this conversation, directors Milo Rau, Anna Karasińska, Eglė Švedkauskaitė and Naubertas Jasinskas will discuss the word and text in theatre, why and how the boundaries of it should be expanded in theatre.

Date: 2 October | 20:30
Venue: Arts Printing House,
Pocket Hall (Šiltadaržio str. 6)

Director Anna Karasińska workshop: Working from personal substance

Director Anna Karasińska invites to a two-day workshop focusing on the creation of a text for the theatre stage based on personal experience. Directors, playwrights, and performers will analyse and create material for theatre performances, discuss the basics of text, its creation, and ways of adapting it to the stage.

The workshop will also address topical issues in playwriting such as: who is the author of the text? How to work safely with personal content?

Dates: 2, 3 October | 11:00–15:00
Venue: Arts Printing House
(Šiltadaržio str. 6)

In collaboration with the audio theatre “Bilietų nėra”, a new audio tour is presented every year at “Sirenos” festival Club. This year we are telling a tale about Rietavas Manor Park. A place created by a person for a person, so that the person could admire nature and draw spiritual strength from it. The meditative qualities of the audio tour open a rich world of sensations, allowing us to establish an individual relationship with the space, encouraging us to notice details and heightening our senses.

Rasa Kregždaitė

Rietavas gardener

Audio tour

In a 1938 interview recorded in the Kaunas radio studio, which was unexpectedly discovered in the archives, a journalist interviews Bronislav Saponka, the gardener at the Oginskiai Rietavas residence. The man started this work in 1902, when the town was still under the rule of the last Duke of the dynasty, Bogdan Oginskis, and finished it in 1937, when not a single brick of the residence was left standing. Bronislav tells how he saw the palace in all its splendour, then witnessed the depression of the Duke, which led to the end of caring for the estate, the destruction of the palace during the First World War, and finally the government’s permission to demolish it. During all these events, Saponka continued to maintain the garden, conservatory, and greenhouses, and in the late 1930’s he was personally involved in the rescue of the most valuable plants and their transfer to the Kaunas Botanical Garden.

Composer Andrius Šiurys, historian Regina Šiurytė-Šimulienė (both from Rietavas), dramaturg Rimantas Ribačiauskas and producer Rasa Kregždaitė offer a docu-fictional audio experience based on an interview that does not exist in reality and fragments of archival documents. Walking along the paths of the Rietavas Manor Park, named after Oginskiai family, listeners are invited to immerse themselves in a musical journey about the passage of time, the complex relationship between man and nature, and the tendency to cherish and destroy it.

Directed and composed by:
Andrius Šiurys
Dramaturg:
Rimantas Ribačiauskas
Historian:
Regina Šiurytė-Šimulienė

Theatre Is a Place of Truth

Milo Rau

Once I saw a monologue at the Berlin Volksbühne, staged by a friend. The leading role was played by an actor who had been in the ensemble for almost 20 years, but for reasons unknown to me had not been given a single role. At some point in the play, he was about to die, and this actor, dressed and made up like in a silent movie, suddenly stopped in the middle of the stage. He had been talking the whole time, without pause, but now he stopped and looked around. It became quiet, for what felt like a very long time. And then this actor lifted his finger as if he wanted to say something, opened a bottom flap of the stage and jumped in. He was gone. As far as I'm concerned: forever.

Another time, a peasant woman came on stage, it was in East Congo, in Bukavu. That happened as part of a people's trial that we organised there against the big mining companies. We had to convince the farmer's wife for weeks to perform. She had been deported, just like her whole village, to a windy mountain, her goats had drunk from a cyanide contaminated lake near the gold mine and had died. She told all this, and while she was talking, for some reason the stopwatch went off. So she started talking about her dreams. That she wanted to return to her village, how many rooms her house should have, how many cows

she would have. As we saw later, this took more than an hour. A hall of 1000 people listened spell-bound to this peasant woman.

About 15 years earlier, we played ping-pong in a Berlin off-theatre. A post-dramatic company had performed a Maoist production play for fun, and during the intermission ping-pong tables were pushed onto the stage. I was too late, the play should have continued when we were in the middle of the match. The actors were at the side and gave us signs, they wanted to continue, we waved back: almost finished! The time of the game and the time of the performance overlapped, pause and play became one, for a few minutes, as so often in the theatre.

I like the way sheep come on stage: their initial hesitant, then comfortable presence. I like rain and wind and heavy objects on stage. I like machines, I like instruments, but I also like it when there's nothing on stage at all. I like to watch children at warm-up rehearsals: their total mastery of form and emotion. I like long monologues and long silences.

I like it when actors draw attention to themselves and then release us from it. Above all, I like that you always have to be complete on stage. You can't cut, you can't trick, the audience always

sees everything, in real time. It is a completely different exercise from filming, it is a completely different exercise from writing. It's for example impossible to make an enumeration like this one in the theatre. Time passes uniformly on stage, as on any given day. The room is absolutely visible, like a waiting room: always there, stubbornly. "And something wonderful is supposed to happen here?", one sometimes thinks.

Because the theatre is so unmodern, so antiquated, because it is a place of truth (and humility before the materiality of the world and its inhabitants), it has become a place of horror vacui. I personally hated the theatre for a long time: it screams, uses old texts, music, only to forget what it is. Why can't you just watch someone go from right to left? Watch how a person talks, how they reveal themselves? How they are there? Why can we no longer bear the pure existence for which theatre is the place? Perhaps theatre is an exercise for our time: one has to come to terms with what little we have. We are human beings, we do not lack anything. We have bodies, a few languages, social norms, a sometimes violent and sometimes promising history. We have each other, but we also have the long paths that every word - especially a "no", a "that can no longer be

done", i.e. the revolt - sometimes has to take deep inside us. We have much, but also no abundance. The theatre says: "That must be enough". And I want to see that, in all its extension. A victory of humanity interests me more in the theatre than elsewhere: because it is subject to the rules of reality like no other.

Why theatre? Because the stage makes people appear. Because it - how could that be forgotten? - is our real place. The theatre I like is the place where what we have is there: no more and no less. An actress once told me the following scene: An actor, desperate as a Chekhov figure, shoots himself backstage. After some time he reappears, walks to the ramp covered in blood. Is he a ghost? Should one be frightened by him? One does not know. But then he laughs and bows.

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For a second year in a row, “Sirenos” Lithuanian theatre showcase is observed and evaluated by an international jury. This year the jury, that is not limited by any imposed rules or restrictions, will award three prizes to the authors of the most interesting art pieces. The prize for the winners is a musical instrument, the theremin, which sounds as a response to the songs sirens.

This year’s jury members are: Charlotte Orti von Havranek (Germany), Ewa Zembok (Czech Republic), Geoliane Arab (Lebanon), Hyde Hytti (Finland) and Łukasz Twarkowski (Poland).

Charlotte Orti von Havranek is an artistic director and curator of the festival „Fast Forward“. She studied German language and literature, philosophy, and art history at the University of Hamburg. She works in the theatre as a dramaturg of drama and dance performances.

Ewa Zembok is the curator of the “Kutna Hora Performing Arts” Festival and founder of Divadlo X10. She studied sociology, cinema and new media in Poland and directing in the Czech Republic. In her work, she deals with social and political themes, realises drama theatre, authorial and site specific projects, she is interested in art in public space. In 2021 she launched Rekultur, an independent production platform.

Geoliane Arab is a producer and director, curator of performing arts at the French organisation ONDA (Office national de diffusion artistique). She studied performing arts and law at the Lebanese University. Geoliane started working as a performer and choreographer in 2006 and gradually shifted towards cultural management and international development.

Hyde Hytti is the International Projects Producer at the Finnish Theatre Information Centre (TINFO). He studied theatre directing, producing, art history, media. Hyde is not only a manager and producer, but also a playwright and dramaturg. He has been interested in Lithuanian theatre and has been observing its processes for the last three decades.

Łukasz Twarkowski is a video artist, set designer, film and theatre director, known to Lithuanian audiences as the creator of performances “Black Sun”, “Lokis” and “Respublika”. He started working in theatre as a video artist in collaboration with director Krystian Lupa. In his performances he tries to understand and reveal the experiences of contemporary people immersed in a techno-cultural environment.

