

Le  
**THEATRE**  
en Pologne

The  
**THEATRE**  
in Poland

3-4

2006



# Le THEATRE en Pologne

# The THEATRE in Poland

Revue trimestrielle du Centre polonais de l'Institut international du théâtre  
The Quarterly Magazine of the Polish Centre of the International Theatre Institute

Varsovie  
Juillet-Décembre 2006

## Sommaire

<i>Halina Machulska et son ASSITEJ</i> – Henryk Izidor Rogacki .....	3
<i>Le Teatr Lalka – tradition et modernité</i> – Liliana Bardijewska .....	9
<i>La marionnette a ses secrets. Entretien avec P. Aigner, M. b. Chodaczynski, M. Jarnuszkiewicz, A. Walny</i> – Katarzyna Rączka, Bartłomiej Miernik .....	16
<i>Un monde virtuel</i> – Magdalena Legendź .....	23
<i>«Votarium» de Joanna Braun. Théâtre du corps à l'état d'anticipation</i> – Agnieszka Koecher-Hensel .....	29
<b>Nouveaux spectacles</b>	
<i>Coup de génie ou fait du hasard bénéfique?</i> – Henryk Izidor Rogacki .....	32
<i>Où souffle l'esprit du chant</i> – Piotr Gruszczyński .....	36
<i>Le pouvoir aux jeunes!</i> – Daniel Cichy .....	40
<i>Ce n'est pas du politique («Tartuffe»)</i> – Aleksandra Rembowska .....	44
<i>«Au-dessus des cimes est le calme» – aux yeux des critiques</i> .....	50
<i>Au fil de la presse</i> .....	55
<b>Nouvelles pièces polonaises</b>	
<i>Tomasz Man: «Bien»</i> – Marek Radziwon .....	58
<b>Livres sur le théâtre</b>	
<i>Sujet: Grzegorzewski</i> – Jacek Wakar .....	60
<b>Chronique</b> .....	64
<b>Actualités polonaises dans le monde</b> .....	68

## Contents

<i>Halina Machulska and her ASSITEJ</i> – Henryk Izidor Rogacki .....	6
<i>Teatr Lalka – Tradition and Modernity</i> – Liliana Bardijewska .....	12
<i>Puppets Have Their Secrets. An Interview with P. Aigner, M. b. Chodaczynski, M. Jarnuszkiewicz and A. Walny</i> – Katarzyna Rączka, Bartłomiej Miernik .....	18
<i>Virtual World</i> – Magdalena Legendź .....	26
<i>“Votarium” of Joanna Braun. Theatre of Body in the State of Anticipation</i> – Agnieszka Koecher-Hensel .....	30
<b>New Productions</b>	
<i>Concept or Fortunate Coincidence?</i> – Henryk Izidor Rogacki .....	34
<i>Born of the Soul of Song</i> – Piotr Gruszczyński .....	38
<i>Youth Rules!</i> – Daniel Cichy .....	42
<i>It's Not Politics (“Tartuffe”)</i> – Aleksandra Rembowska .....	48
<i>Critics about “Over All the Treetops Is Repose”</i> .....	53
<i>Around the Press</i> .....	57
<b>New Polish Plays</b>	
<i>Tomasz Man: “All Right”</i> – Marek Radziwon ...	59
<b>Books on the Theatre</b>	
<i>About Grzegorzewski</i> – Jacek Wakar .....	62
<b>Reports</b> .....	66
<b>Polish News from Abroad</b> .....	69



## Born of the Soul of Song

*The Diary of One Who Vanished*, by Leoš Janáček; *Sonnets* by Paweł Mykietyń after Shakespeare, directed by Łukasz Kos, staging and sets by Leszek Mądzik, at Teatr Wielki – Opera Narodowa. Premiere on 21 January 2006.

In the first season under the new combined directorship of Kazimierz Kord and Mariusz Treliński, the Warsaw National Opera like other grand European operas has set itself the task of 'theatralizing' again the opera genre. The intervention is essential, if opera is to stay or rather return to the living arts, to lift itself out of a world of convention and complete domination of music over theatrical form. The Kord/Treliński duet guarantees that the process will be a success, for the former is an experienced conductor, while the latter has moved the opera world with his productions.

Apart from the main stage performances, last year also witnessed the introduction of the cycle, "Territories" ("Terytoria") designed to explore the possibilities of modern opera and to define its theatrical territory. Inaugurating the cycle was *Curlew River* by Benjamin Britten, but the most interesting of the premieres was a staging of two cycles of songs, one by Leoš Janáček, a composer seldom put on in Poland, and the other by Paweł Mykietyń. Both presented in one evening, paired to see what would come of such an encounter and for whom. Janáček's cycle premiered in 1921, Mykietyń's in 2001.

Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Vanished* with a text in Czech by poet Ozeň Kalda tells the story of a farmer in love with a Gypsy woman. Janáček's love is anxious and overflowed with melancholy, because he fears his parents will not accept his choice of a foreign woman. Finally, he decides to throw himself into the dark vortex of his feelings, yet fear and anxiety appear to be stronger than his desire. "What is it that I am doing?

Is it a good choice  
To make my life  
With a Gypsy train?"

Czech being a soft language, it imbues the lover's struggles with a yearning

sound that is wonderfully accentuated by the tenor's voice.

In turn, Mykietyń's six songs with the text of seven Shakespearean sonnets are performed by a male soprano. The singing starts from recitation and rises quickly to full artificiality, as if the performer was making an effort to surpass himself not having found fulfillment in love. The texts chosen by Mykietyń are the confessions of a disappointed lover, a lover who was looking for romantic fulfillment and was disappointed by both sexes. They are the confessions of a man consumed by feverish love, leading him to complete resignation, suicidal states and a desire for self-annihilation: "Tired with all these, for restless death I cry". The disappointment is so deep that suicide seems to be the only way out, were it not that the beloved would be left completely alone after the death of the disappointed lover. That last word, "alone" drops out of the tumultuous singing like a pebble into a river of worry.

Both performances are presented in Leszek Mądzik's theatrical vision. The singer and accompanying pianist are in both cases the pivots of the staging, almost symbiotically joined together. Pianist Maciej Grzybowski is also perfect in his acting role. Dressed in the first part in black and in the second one in white, he guides the singer, appearing like Charon who draws the unfortunate into a chasm with the sounds of ultimate feelings. Janáček is sung by Czech tenor Ales Briscein. Composed, practically motionless, he travels with the piano on a platform that moves on stage. The only stronger color accent in the darkness that fills the stage in *The Diary* is his red waistcoat and the crushed foulard tie under his chin. His lover (Monika Lendzion) appears from time to time. Arno Raunig sings in *Sonnets*. He is

---

The opera performances reviewed here by Piotr Gruszczyński and Daniel Cichy are already a song of the past. In the first days of the new artistic season (2006/2007), a new chief director of the National Opera was nominated unexpectedly by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. The current artistic director of the stage, Mariusz Treliński, has announced his departure and many of the performances from his time will soon be taken off the bills. Even so, the most recent premieres have been sufficiently significant and relevant, inspiring and even turning around the course of an 'old river' in some respects, to earn a moment of reflection and a few words of comment that will mark their presence in the program.



painted white, his head shaved, he is dressed in a full-length crushed white robe and white waistcoat, slender and delicate man, but at the same time unusually expressive, Raunig leaves a strong impression. He seems virtually genderless. As if he has all become the song.

In *The Diary of One Who Vanished* Mądzik introduced on stage scenic elements illustrating the text of the song – strange trees enclosed within triangles of dark walls, a great wall of straw from which Janicek's lover appears. Too literal and pushy are these imagings. Fortunately, in *Sonnets* he reduced the number of scenic elements. The stage is lit and the only decoration consists of huge revolving prisms of mirrors which compose and recompose the singer's reflection as if in a giant kaleidoscope.

This second premiere in the "Territories" cycle can hardly be considered a performance. It is rather a staged evening of song. Nonetheless, the theatre that is created during such a performance can be truly wonderful and it adds to the musical side of the project. It may not be essential, but the imagination of the audience profits undeniably. It is better to tell the story of the unfortunate Janicek in darkness than in the bright lights of a concert hall. And it is much better to wonder about the vagueness and ephemeral nature of the sonnet singer than to struggle with the transparency of a philharmonic performer. Theatre is born of song all by itself. Nietzsche knew that. It is enough not to interfere and to let the imagination of the audience and that of the authors of the performance work together. Watching this performance, one even wishes for a return of theatre that is born of the soul of music to recreate the bond with mystery that is severed so often.

Janicek vanished from the world, the miserable Shakespearean lover balances on the edge of disappearing. In both cases love is curiously near to death, in keeping with the nature of such extreme feelings and emotions.

The third performance was followed by a discussion with musicologists and members of the audience. It turned out of the long panel discussion that musicologists (as they professed themselves) find it very difficult to visualize a song. What comes of itself and is born by itself in theatre should be accepted as a natural gift. No need to squander it in academic debates on "how to visualize" music. It is as if iconoclasm was needed to protect musical initiation. All the more justified are Mariusz Treliński's efforts to transform opera into theatre, while respecting the soul of song and music. Perhaps with the passing of time he will manage to overcome the conservative pretences of the audiences.

PIOTR GRUSZCZYŃSKI



SONNETS, Paweł Mykietyń,  
d'après / after Shakespeare.  
Arno Raunig.

Photo Stefan Okołowicz