



SOUTH-WEST
UNIVERSITY
·NEOFIT RILSKI·
BLAGOEVGRAD, BULGARIA

VOLUME 7
2009

SCIENTIFIC Research

ISSN 1312-7535

ELECTRONIC
ISSUE

THE WAY TO EUROPE

Values, quests, practices in the Bulgarian cultural space at the end of the XX-th century (II part – Dancing theater)

Scientific adviser:

Associate professor Miroslava Kortenska, Doctor of Art Theory

This project financing was awarded according to the program „Scientific researches in state universities”, in the field of „Cultural-and-historical inheritance” to the „Scientific investigations” fund at the Ministry of Public Education and Science for the period 2007- 2010, with basic organization the South-West University „Neofit Rilski” in the town of Blagoevgrad.

Associate professor Dr Miroslava Kortenska

Dancing theater – new language of the today's stage

If we ask ourselves in what direction goes the modern theater and which are its steady trends, one of the most indisputable answers will be related to the visual theater and all its variations including the most popular - the dancing theater.

Since the second half of the 20-th century processes have been developing predetermining the domination of vision and body language over the traditional word communication. The absurdists, and later Pinter, capture the decomposition - of the unity of action, speech and thinking - in the modern man and create a new type of word sounding in the stage context. They perceive painfully the devaluation of the words and of their sense - on many occasions profaned by modifications in their social use - by politicians and media. In the theater alternative expressive system is created in which words are only part of the potential to influence the public. Simultaneously, strong trend emerges in seeking a new cosmopolitan language in the theater, more adequate to the time at the end of the 20-th century and more efficient in this age of new technologies transforming the world into a global village.

Grotovski, Robert Whistle, Eugenio Barba, biggest directors innovators, investigate in different directions but having one common objective – international stage language which to express the universal values and dilemmas of the time. The actor already goes out of his trivial behavior and places himself in one universally-valid context where he transforms into an instrument for creating a new language – language of body, of dancing, of an esthetic alphabet of the modern vision.

There is also a contrary wave of researches by a numerous group of choreographers; most brilliant among them are: Pina Baush, Marta Gream, who succeed to free the modern dance and to transform it into universally-valid language on the modern stage. This trend – with more than 30-year of history already - has its big names and stage performances with many-faced manifestations. Thus, the dancing theater is formed as a most characteristic mix, most typical synthesis to which the modern stage has evolved. This line already dominates at all the big forums and festivals; it is already an accepted language “spoken” by the modern theater.

I do this introduction because it is reasonable - in the beginning of the 21 century - we to ask ourselves: where are we? Do we still write using goosequill while technologies, synethism and stage language are light years ahead of us. If we enter into our local scenery a series of questions and arte facts appear giving differently-orientated answers to the main question: how we share and develop the trends of the modern theater? Today when the art has entered into its post-modernistic maturity, when the main measurement of professionalism is the level of synthesis between genres and types of art manifestations, and the stage language predominantly consists of signs, esthetically precise, do we understand that every attempt to go round these achievements of the

modern art condemn us to restoration instinct and home-made comfort. Because in the nucleus of the notion of modern theater stands the dancing theater.

In our country there is a whole consecution of arte facts imposing new trends but unable to emancipate and create cultural situation close to the European widely-accepted art realities. The production of the “Arabesk” company – seriously involved in the modern dancing – does not succeed to impose the new trend on the modern stage, in a dancing theater. Indisputably this would contribute our posters to become more attractive for the numerous festivals and forums in Europe with their interest toward developing the dancing theater as a modern form of synthetism and of a cosmopolitan stage language. This would be a good impulse and context for the “Sofia dance week” festival which by its second edition /September 2009/ strengthens the public interest toward the dancing theater.

The problem settlement of the modernization of the Bulgarian stage counts also on another precedent: two successful performances: “The night before the forests” after Koltes, with director Vladimir Petkov, choreographer Mila Iskrenova, awarded with particularly high appreciations during their tour in France, and “Figures in love flight” /Mila Iskrenova and Tatyana Sokolova/; but they still haven’t emancipated to become important part of our theatrical scenery and have no continuations by the day of today. In both shows participate actors dominating the synthetic technique of the dancing theater and most importantly they enjoy surprisingly long stage life and public interest. They combine the working with serious literary source and its transformation into symbolic visual picture – exquisite, dramatic, impressive.

Another arte fact - indisputably meeting the need the dancing theater to be recognized as part of nowadays’ stage practice - is the “Arabesk”’s performance “Adoration and violence”, variations on themes of “Don Juan” by Mozart, directed by Boryana Sechanova and a strong team. This is a complex post-modernistic esthetic work into which – on a multimedia background of impressive visions /director Marta Varlaamova/ - runs the dancing performance after a musical score orchestrated by Hristo Petkov, based on Mozart’s motives, with elegant and expressive costumes made by Tsvetanka Petkova-Stoynova. One real art-installation synthesizing all the expressive means of the modern vision. Particularly interesting is the feminine point of view of Boryana Sechanova - regarding the myth of Don Juan – more sensitive, morbid, but more emotional, reaching here and there ecstasy... The courageous crossing between the modern context and the eternal suffering and tensions between the two sexes provokes rich associations and impact. Of course, this new-generation arte fact comprises incompatibility in its collage of numerous means used but its appearance speaks about new free way of thinking and feeling on stage. Thus, Sechanova demonstrates that she is one of the leading personalities of the dancing theater in Bulgaria. After “Adoration and violence”, she and the “Arabesk” company, directed by her, convincingly take part in this actual measurement on our modern stage... The “lath is fixed”, the new synthetism becomes reality.

Now even in the performances with different “handwriting” it will be impossible to range visions without focus, simple-hearted and unidirectional actings ... Joyfully, already a practice is introduced: well-known choreographers - such as Mila Iskrenova, Boryana Sechanova, Tatyana Sokolova and, of course, sign figures such as Margarita Gradechlieva - to discipline the visions of ambitious theatrical projects. All these multi-directional processes running in the Bulgarian theatrical scenery - and the local presence of the mentioned arte facts - indisputably form a new cultural situation with each-time-further focusing; this will make our theatrical personalities to replace the cassette by the disk as this is the practice all over the world.

The new cultural situation imposes regrouping of personalities and of companies who are in time with the modern researches and represent the today's face of the Bulgarian theater; it requires awareness of the importance of the processes running on our stage of today. Particularly now, when we are to appear - with modern arte facts and not only with our folklore - on the European cultural market. There will be admitted performances having adopted the new theatrical language which will naturally become part of the face of the modern stage. The rest is history ...

PERSONALITIES OF THE BULGARIAN DANCING THEATER

If we review the Bulgarian nowadays' cultural context - into which are settled survival philosophy and pragmatism leading to commercialization and stagnation of the processes on the Bulgarian stage - by merit can be highlighted the space uphold by the new leaders of the dancing theater. They promoted themselves and opened their work for the achievements and researches in Europe being “in time” with the new language becoming new communication of the new century. They created exquisite esthetic visions and messages, professional and impressive, which conquered their own circle of admirers. Today only on the territory of the dancing theater there are real alternative manifestations of freedom and researching of new forms as an offset to our theatrical scenery fallen into durable stagnation and restoration out-of-time period.

Here I present three of the leading figures in our dancing theater: Boryana Sechanova, the new leader, Mila Iskrenova, sensual intellectual, Galina Borisova, alternative and restless.