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## MONO-PERFORMANCES IN THE MODERN UKRAINIAN THEATRE

*In the article the panorama of mono-performances in the modern Ukrainian theatre is reproduced, the concepts of 'mono-performance' and 'monodrama' are analyzed, a conclusion on all-round development of 'mono-performance' genre in modern Ukraine is made, as evidenced by the large number of mono-performances on the stationary theaters' repertory, performances of little theatre repertory companies on the experimental stages, and festival movement in this area.*

*Key words: mono-performance, monodrama, theater, theatrical space, theater of Ukraine.*

At the end of the XX century – at the beginning of the XXI century the interest in mono-performances has significantly increased in the world theater arts, particularly in Ukraine, as evidenced by the increase in their number on the theatrical repertory, continued existence of one-person performance festivals (international mono-performance festival 'Monocle' in St. Petersburg since 1997, in Bitola (Macedonia) since 1999, 'Vidlunnia' in Kyiv since 1999, women monodrama festivals 'Maria' in Kyiv since 2004 and others), organization of one-person theatres (the Khmelnytskyi City Mono-Theatre 'Kut', the Kyiv Mono-Theatre 'MIF', the Volodymyr Mono-Theatre 'Benefis' et al.). The interest of national and foreign researchers (N. Ageev, N. Bondareva, Zh. Bortnyk, N. Prokopova et al.) is focused mainly on the literary aspect of mono-performances, but theatricologists rarely turn to this genre. There are no scientific works specifically devoted to mono-performances in the modern Ukrainian theater.

The aim of this article is to reproduce a panorama of mono-performances in the Ukrainian modern theater.

Mono-performance (from the Greek monos – 'one') – is a performance of one artist, 'one-person show'. The mono-performances are rather conditionally divided into monodramas (performances originally designed to be played by one actor), adaptations (adaptation of works where there are many characters for performing by one person on the stage), compositions (from various works – poetry, short stories, pieces of music, the sequence of which builds a certain lyric-dramatic story) [8].

R. Kolosov outlines the following genres in the modern one-person show with the verbal-linguistic basis: dramatic reading, dramatic storytelling and dramatic [4, p. 1].

It is appropriate to elaborate on the concept of 'monodrama' (from the Greek monos and drama 'drama'), as defined by S. Mokulskyi: 'a dramatic work played by one actor from the beginning to the end. If the actor plays only one role, then the monodrama is an advanced monologue addressed directly to the audience ('On the Harmful Effect of Tobacco' by A. Chekhov), or to a present wordless character ('The Wayfarer' by V. Bryusov) or to a character that is behind the scenes (sketches based on a conversation on the phone etc.).

Monodrama is quite a different type where one actor sequentially plays several parts accordingly changing his personal appearance' [7]. The basis of the latter S. Mokulskyi sees in archaic pre-Aeschylean Greek tragedy, where the actor, changing their mask and costume, consistently played different characters. Such performances include, for example, A. Raikin's shows. Thus, in many cases, the concepts of 'mono-performance' and 'monodrama' are perceived as identical.

A monodrama, which the external centralization of drama action is typical for, is opposite to M. Evreinov's understanding, who put forward the internal centralization of action, transformation of 'an alien drama' to 'my drama', that is a drama of a viewer themselves. Explaining the term of 'monodrama', P. Pavi notes that 'in the early XX century monodrama has become a genre where everything is reduced to a single character's worldview, even if he or she plays the parts of many characters,' and that 'it was Evreinov in his 'An Introduction to Monodrama' (1909) and in monodrama 'The Side-Scenes of the Soul' who managed to establish the genre. For him it is 'the kind of performance where the world around the actor is depicted in the way he or she takes it, every moment of stage being'. Thanks to the depicting the external world it's a public that will become a protagonist's partner' [9, p. 258?259].

At the end of the XX century – at the beginning of the XXI century the interest of actors' language arts to mono-existence on the stage has increased that is embodied in a large number of mono-performances: P. Suskind's 'The Double-Bass' performed by A. Raikin, E. Grishkovets's 'How I Ate a Dog', A. Barikko's '1900' performed by A. Menshikov, D. Bykov's 'The Citizen Poet' performed by M. Efremov, Bernard-Henri Levy's 'Hotel Europe' and others.

In Ukraine, the process of creating mono-performances also has intensified. Mono-performances have become traditional for non-repertory experimental stages, for example, for the stage of the Les Kurbas National Centre for Performing Arts. At this Center 'The Theater in the Basket' 'has taken an elitist niche in the cultural space of Ukraine for a long time and conducts creative research at the intersection of modernist and post-modernist aesthetic principles, conducts research in the field of theatrical sign, symbol, metaphor, creates its own, unique dramatic devices of theatrical expression' [5]. The theatre repertory includes a few non-drama based mono-performances, such as 'The Dream. A Comedy' based on T. Shevchenko's poem (I. Volytska as a director, L. Danylchuk as a performer) – a poetic and philosophical reflection on the historical fate of Ukraine. 'The persona of Shevchenko is flying above the ground in his dream, and he sees the conceits: three ravens symbolizing the evil forces Ukrainian, Russian and Polish peoples; the harmony of Ukrainian nature and pseudo-national expression of feelings; military clique and soldier drill; Peterburg together with the king and the queen, despotic autocrats and bureaucrats, and imperial monuments. Phantasmagoria of visions and images, presented in parody, sarcastic, grotesque way, increases the tragedy of Ukrainian history', as stated in the abstract of the performance [12].

In March, 2015 a monodrama 'The Voice of the Silent Abyss' (an author is Neda Nezhdana, a director is Iryna Volytska, an actress is Lydia Danylchuk) was premiered on the stage of the National Centre. It was the first time when 'The Theatre in the Basket' appealed to modern Ukrainian plays, it 'starts with a paradoxical fantastic situation when a woman

feels that she supposedly can fly, but something prevents her from doing it. What is it exactly? Is it fear, sin or misunderstanding? The heroine seeks and attempts, and when she finally takes off, she wonders why? What prevents us from flying, in other words from being free? Is it fear of loss or fear of death? Or is it the feeling of guilt? Is it rage? Or maybe is it the love of the enemy? The shoot dead father, the mother died of illness, the utterly robbed house, the children done mad because of hunger and fear, and in addition – the fatal love for one of those to blame for such situation... How to survive all this, to look into this ‘bottomless pit’ and not go crazy? The heroine is not looking for culprits outside – she is looking inside herself, in her own doubts, fears, misunderstanding, loss of opportunities. The abyss of grief and despair is growing around her, but the worst is the abyss of fear and hatred inside her. The heart is torn between the image of a wolf and of a bird, between cold and fire, frustration and anger’, as A. Karpenko writes in his critical article [3].

Also in March, 2015 on the stage of the Les Kurbas National Centre for Performing Arts the Kyiv theater ‘MIST’ played a monodrama ‘The Temple of Her Devil’ based on Dmytro Hrystov’s play ‘Marilyn Monroe: Triumph and Agony’ (with Oleksandr Mirosnychenko as a director, and Uliana Lib as Marilyn Monroe).

The repertory of well-recognized state stationary national theaters also constantly includes mono-performances. The repertoire of the Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theater includes monodrama ‘The Moment of Love’ (staged by T. Zhyrko and based on Volodymyr Vynnychenko’s works, with E. Nyschuk as an actor), ‘The Old Woman Is Hatching’ (based on the works of Tadeush Ruzhevych, directed by Zbigniew Hshanovskiyi (Poland), with Larysa Kadyrova as an actress), ‘Maria (When We Two Parted ...)’ (directed by Zbigniew Hshanovskiyi, with Larysa Kadyrova as an actress). The latter play is devoted to the life and work of the great Ukrainian actress Maria Zankovetska. S. Hshanovskiyi and L. Kadyrova, the authors of the scenic composition, used M. Zankovetska’s documents, correspondence and diaries, when working on the play. The history of uneasy relationship between the brilliant actress and her years-long stage partner, a coryphaeus of Ukrainian theater – Mykola Sadovskiyi, is reproduced on the stage by using dramatic devices.

The first performance of the monodrama ‘Never Cry for Me’, based on Mariia Matios’s novel of the same name, on the stage of Kyiv theaters was on March 18, 2015 (the play was premiered in Kherson Region at the end of January). The leading character of the performance is grandmother Yustyna, masterfully played by L. Kadyrova, spoke from the stage about death safely, openly, without fear, and even humorously. For her a coffin is her cradle, in which there are dreams and delight, curiosity and memories, her love – all these Yustochka as if gets out of the coffin and tells about it. For grandmother Yustyna death must be ‘according to traditions’, like the transition to another life, which must be done without honor, sadness or cry. And the last days should be lived according to good mind, so as you were not ashamed of some moments of your life or for some actions. You should live ‘as you mammy and daddy told you to do it’ [11].

The monodramas ‘Oleksandr Vertynskiyi. The Ball of the Lord...’ (directed and staged by O. Gavryliuk, with Yevgen Lunchenko as Vertynskiyi), ‘The Marriages are Made in Heaven’ (composition by Lydia Yaremchuk, based on the novel of Leo Tolstoy ‘War and Peace’,

focused on the character of Natasha Rostova, directed by L. Ostropolskyi) are played on the stage of the Lesia Ukrainka National Academic Theatre of Russian Drama.

The mono-performance 'The Blue Car' (by Yaroslav Stelmakh, directed by Ihor Slavynskyi, with Oleksii Vertynskyi as an actor) has been played on the stage of the Kyiv Academic Youth Theater since 1998.

On the occasion of the anniversary of Lina Kostenko the first night of the mono-performance based on her book 'I'll never forgive you this debt' was on the small stage of the T.H. Shevchenko Dnipropetrovsk Academic Ukrainian Music and Drama Theater. Initiated and played by Mariia Protsenko, directed by Lydia Kushkova. Text composition based on Lina Kostenko's works, prepared by M. Protsenko, is perceived as a confession of the actress [13].

In 2004, when celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of the great actress Mariia Zankovetska, upon the initiative of the actress Larysa Kadyrova, a Shevchenko National Prize laureate, the International Women Monodrama Festival 'Maria' appeared in the cultural space of Ukraine [10]. Since then, the festival has been held annually in the second half of September - early October in Kyiv on the Small Stage of the I. Franko National Theatre. Every year the festival celebrates significant dates of Ukrainian or world culture. Indeed, the IV Festival was dedicated to the 125th anniversary of the Theater of Luminaries. In 2008 the world celebrated the 80th anniversary of the birth of Garcia Marquez, a Colombian writer, in 2009, when the world celebrated the 200th anniversary of M. Hohol, the festival was dedicated to this writer, the VII festival was dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the birth of Anton Chekhov [2].

Performances are basically in the original language, without interpretation, emphasizing the universality of world theater theatrical expression that, according to the words of S. Maksymenko, 'today tends to nonverbal expression' [6]. So every time the demands for professional qualifications of the actresses increase.

Despite the difficult political and financial situation, the tenth festival was held in 2014. At the opening of the festival Larysa Kadyrova said: 'The idea of national theatre is not a restoration of traditions, but rather a search of their development in the contemporary art. This is a challenge of stereotypes, a destruction of inertia of thinking in the name of truth, redefining the world theatrical ideas for co-creation of the audience, attraction the public to reflection in order to identify the problem issues of life' [1]. The subject of performances of the last festival was consonant with the military situation in the country.

During the festival the audience could see the performance directed by Polish director Stanislaw Medziievskyi 'Mother Meera and her children' (with an English actress Caryl Swift as a performer) - the story of the massacres during the Bosnian war in 1992-1995. During the war the mother has lost her daughter and son, and today she is looking for their remains in 'the struggle of the living for the rights of the dead', in order to get 'the treatment' of memory. 'This mono-performance is a magnifying glass, which shows the human tragedy, the tragedy of a woman who, having given birth, has to bury her children. The world no longer gives birth and, having survived the bloody repressions, must recover and save those who are physically not on the planet. Death in the war is the most absurd and tragic, because war is started by tyrants and villains, but it's the best people who are to die. Themes of lost

memory and destroyed identity are the first key in S. Medziievskyi's performance,' said D. Drozdovskyi [1].

In the performance 'The Virgin' by Magdalena Gower (directed by S. Medziievskyi, with Violetta Komar as an actress) the leading character talks about 'art in the ghetto,' about meeting of beautiful and fatal, about the death, and the loss of a child and resurrection in art, as well as the tragedy of human memory. The heroine is an opera singer, deported in autumn 1941 to the ghetto. She sings the finest arias for the Gestapo. She survives, but the question of the price of such physical survival is raised in the play.

A strong 'final point' of the theatrical part of the festival was the performance 'My William Shakespeare' by Andrzej Severyn, a brilliant actor and a current director of the National Theatre in Warsaw. His Shakespeare is a confession of the wise and experienced actor who, having survived the various roles, situations, psychological states, confirms that 'the whole world is a theater' [1].

Also in Ukraine in June 2014 the Sixteenth International Mono-performance Festival 'Vidlunnia' was held with the support of UNESCO at the Kyiv Academic Theatre 'Koleso'.

So, we can say that Ukraine happened to be aside of the global trend of mainstreaming and increasing the number of mono-performances. It can be proved by at least three aspects: the presence of mono-performances on the fixed repertory of the leading stationary theaters, constant experimentation of the little theaters in the field of mono-performances, traditional character of international mono-performance festivals in the country. Today we can observe the trend of increasing interest in staging national plays and creating performances on the basis of literary works of Ukrainian poets and writers (T. Shevchenko, L. Kostenko, M. Matis etc). We believe that mono-performances will become even more popular in Ukraine, because of their portability, ability to respond rapidly to socio-political events by using generalized metaphorical dramatic devices.

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