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Заманауи театр өнерінің өзекті мәселелеріне арналған Халықаралық ғылыми-практикалық онлайн конференция бүгінгі сахна өнерінің теориялық және практикалық мәселерін қарастырды. Конференцияда осы саланың маңызды деген мәселелері бойынша кәсіби театр сыншылары мен театрдың өнерін зерттеуге бет бұрған жас ғалымдар, магистранттар мен докторанттар қатысты. Олар көтерген тақырыптар мен зерттеу нұсқалары бойынша жасаған баяндамалар заманауи театр өнерінде болып жатқан соны үдерістерді, сахнаның көп қабатты қырларын зерделеуге мүмкіндік береді. Конференция материалдары театр өнерінің өзекті мәселелерімен айналысатын мамандарға, студенттер мен жас зерттеуші ғалымдарға арналған.

Международная научно-практическая онлайн конференция, посвященная актуальным проблемам современного театрального искусства посвящена теоретическим и практическим проблемам сценического искусства. В конференции приняли участие профессиональные театральные критики и молодые ученые, магистранты и докторанты, которые обратились к изучению театрального искусства по актуальным вопросам данной сферы. Доклады по поднятым ими темам и объектам исследования позволяют изучать новые процессы, происходящие в современном театральном искусстве. Материалы конференции предназначены для специалистов, студентов и молодых ученых-исследователей, занимающихся актуальными проблемами театрального искусства.

The international scientific and practical online conference dedicated to the actual problems of modern theater art is devoted to the theoretical and practical problems of stage art. The conference was attended by professional theater critics and young scientists, undergraduates and doctoral students who turned to the study of theater art on topical issues in this field. Reports on the topics and objects of research raised by them allow us to study new processes taking place in the modern theater art. The conference materials are intended for specialists, students and young researchers dealing with current problems of theatrical art.

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KOTE MARJANISHVILI'S EXPRESSIONIST PERFORMANCES

By the 1920s, the expressionist movement had embraced many fields of art, but it was more popular in German theatrical art. Expressive theatre is characterized by: direct expression of ideas, abstract characters who are carriers of social functions. In drama, a person has become an appendage of a profession chosen by himself/herself. A large place in the work of expressionists was given to the unconscious, the loss of a person's inner integrity, split personality. The features of expressionist dramaturgy are similar to those of intellectual dramaturgy. A certain thesis, idea is given, and action unfolds around it; There are no individual characters. For the German expressionists, the theatre was a kind of "spiritual brotherhood", and the audience was also involved in this brotherhood. Thus, they tried to confront the theatre against discord and hostility existing in the society.

The history of the modern Georgian theatre begins on November 25, 1922 with the premiere of Lope de Vega's *The Sheep Well* staged by Kote Marjanishvili. Throughout his creative activity, Kote Marjanishvili was constantly looking for new

theatrical-directing forms and methods. Therefore, it is not surprising that he not only staged the works of expressionist playwrights, first at the Rustaveli Theatre¹⁸, and then at the Marjanishvili Theatre¹⁹, but also applied expressionist performing techniques, scenographic researches in combination with Georgian traditional theatrical art.

In the 1923-24 season, he, as artistic director, invited Mikheil Koreli²⁰, Sandro (Alexander) Akhmeteli²¹ as stage directors of the Rustaveli Theatre and began working with them on the plays of German expressionist playwrights: *The Mirror Man* (*Spiegelmensch*, 1920) by Franz Werfel, Kieger, 1920). *From Morning to Midnight* (*Von Morgens bis Mitternachts*, 1916), *Gas* by Georg Kaiser, *Masses Man* (*Masse Mensch*, 1921) by Ernst Toller. Later, Marjanishvili returns to expressionist drama. The director, who was expelled from the Rustaveli Theatre, on November 3, 1928 opens the second state theatre of Kutaisi-Batumi²², founded together along with his associates, with the play *Hoppla, We're Alive!* (*Hoppla, wir leben!*) by Ernst Toller.

Akaki Vasadze²³ in his book “Memories, Thoughts” describes in detail the hard work of the Rustaveli Theatre on the repertoire of the 1923-24 season, as well as the rehearsal process of expressionist performances. During one of the rehearsals, Marjanishvili said to Akhmeteli (he staged *The Mirror Man* with Akhmeteli): “Observe time through the eyes of an artist. Feel it with your heart and listen to its pulse ... What a huge change compared to yesterday ... The rhythm of life changes in the blink of an eye. Today you are in one situation, and suddenly you find yourself in a different situation. They call it dispatch style, but this was found out yet by Anton Chekhov. [...] I do not mean that

¹⁸ Shota Rustaveli State Drama Theatre.

¹⁹ Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre.

²⁰ Mikheil Koreli (1876-1949) – well-known Georgian director.

²¹ Aleksandre (Sandro) Akhmeteli (1886-1937) – well-known Georgian director.

²² Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre.

²³ Akaki Vasadze (1899-1978) - well-known Georgian actor, Kote Marjanishvili's student.

all expressionists, namely Toller, Kaiser or Werfel, are Chekhov or Gorky, God forbid, no ... but it is obvious that they are trying to convey the present with all its peculiarities in plays. Do you see what an emphasized relationship, attitude, in a word, what a sharp image their heroes demand, in what a fast pace and rhythm they move, what artistic metaphors they dictate²⁴?!”

I think already in that period Marjanishvili, as a great thinker and creator, felt and analyzed the real, true consequences of the Russian revolution of 1917 and the Sovietization of Georgia in 1921. Among other things, perhaps that is why he turned to the dramaturgy of the expressionists, whose works reflect the confrontation between a man, a person and masses, society, and at the same time, most importantly, an ambivalent attitude towards revolutionary transformations.

In Franz Werfel's plays, a person's inner split is the main problem. Georg Kaiser is against industrialization. He wants to create a world in which a person will not be a slave, but a master. Ernst Toller, in his dramatic works, tries to direct action like human consciousness, where dream and reality are intertwined.

Due to the performance of the works of expressionist playwrights at the Rustaveli Theatre, Marjanishvili and the younger generation of creators were cursed as traitors and anathematized by part of the cultural community of Soviet Georgia at that time. Marjanishvili, in order to protect young creators and himself, had to publish a letter in which he put ambiguous meaning: “We are not politicians. We are the builders of culture and, above all, national culture, its language, its national peculiarities and temperament. It is as if we are standing in our homeland without a political struggle, but there are times when this should be reconsidered, re-evaluated, a way should be found to bring new treasures into the art treasury of mankind. Otherwise, we are doomed to freezing, death, loss of many values

²⁴ Vasadze, Akaki. Memories, Thoughts. (ვასაძე, აკაკი. მოგონებები, ფიქრები). Tbilisi, publ. house Kentavri. 2010, 158-159.

due to passive resistance to the needs of life and, possibly, the fatal death of the national image in art²⁵.”

In Georgian theatrical studies, the performances staged by Marjanishvili at the Rustaveli Theatre on the basis of expressionist drama are considered a “failure”. However, I think that this was not a “failure”, but rather Marjanishvili’s master class for directors, actors and scenographers. I would also like to note that Marjanishvili entrusted the setting of the plays by Werfel, Kaiser and Toller to very young Kirill Zdanevich²⁶ and Irakli Gamrekeli²⁷. The scenography created by the expressionist techniques of these performances (stairs, trapezia, spatial division of the stage, etc.) later was developed in the performances of his student Sandro Akhmeteli. Moreover, Marjanishvili not only educated many great directors and actors in Georgian theatre, but also discovered and linked to the theatre such artists as Kiril Zdanevich, Irakli Gamrekeli, Elene Akhvlediani ²⁸ , Petre Otskheli²⁹, Lado Gudiashvili³⁰ and others.

While working on the plays of Werfel, Kaiser and Toller, Marjanishvili tried to go beyond the schematic character of these plays. They do not develop the characters. Characters are, so to speak, megaphones of ideas. Akaki Vasadze, Ushangi Chkheidze, Kukuri Pataridze³¹ – all of them note in their memoirs that the work on these plays gave them a lot. Flexible body, refined plasticity, gestures, different manner of speech... In short, Marjanishvili, working on these plays, refined the technical (and not only) characteristics of the new generation. Marjanishvili tried to emphasize “strained” emotions, passions, expression. Due to

²⁵ Marjanishvili, Kote. Memoirs. (მარჯანიშვილი, კოტე. მემუარები.) Tbilisi, publ. house Khelovneba (Art), 1947, 88.

²⁶ Kirill Zdanevich (1892-1967) - Georgian artist of Polish origin, futurist artist, book illustrator, theatrical designer.

²⁷ Irakli Gamrekeli (1894-1943) - one of the founders of Georgian theatrical painting (scenographer).

²⁸ Elene Akhvlediani (1901-1975) - Georgian painter, graphic artist, theatre and film artist.

²⁹ Petre Otskheli (1907-1937) - Georgian theatrical artist (scenographer).

³⁰ Lado Gudiashvili (1896-1980) - painter, graphic artist, theatre and film artist.

³¹ Pataridze Kukuri (Ivane) (1900-1982) - Georgian theatre director.

the fact that he worked on several plays at the same time, he often could not attend the rehearsals of *Masses Man* (Mikheil Koreli was the co-director), but finally, when he found the time and came to make corrections, he completely turned the original idea upside down, one might say, left nothing of it. He generalized the concreteness of Toller's play, he did not care where the action takes place, in Bavaria or anywhere else on earth, he did not care whether the characters were Bavarians or representatives of other country. The main thing for Marjanishvili was to stage the problem of confrontation between an individual and the masses. The director made the masses (people) the main character.

“He had to cohere polar points - realistic, expressionist, mechanic-rhetorical, conditional theatrical methods³².”— writes Eter Gugushvili.

Marjanishvili used the principle of editing when working with text, made cuttings, shortened or shifted the text, sometimes even added something. He was a full-fledged author of a play (later this was one of the main features of postmodern theatre). At the same time, he worked a lot, with an actor, artist, composer. Marjanishvili used cinema methods in Georgian theatre - editing, close-up, simultaneous action in different planes of the stage, etc. In 1928, he applied directly to movie projection in Toller's *Hoppla, We're Alive!* Then Marjanishvili was criticized, they said that he took it from Piscator. But this is ridiculous, since Toller himself included movie interlude in his play.

In the memoirs of Ushangi Chkheidze³³ and Akaki Vasadze, one can read the general principles of Marjanishvili's work, the main features of Marjanishvili's theatrical language, what directorial techniques the great creator used when working on expressionist drama. For example, in mass scenes, he demanded action, shouts along with plastic expression, rhythmic movements, etc. Marjanishvili made actors to sculpt their characters, starting from rehearsals at the table to *mise-en-scène*. For him, the

³² Gugushvili, Eteri. Kote Marjanishvili, *Life in Art*. (Гугушвили, Этери. Котэ Марджанишвили, Жизнь в искусстве). Moscow, Art. 1979, 296. <http://teatr-lib.ru/Library/Gugushvili/mar/> (last checked on 05.01.21)

³³ Chkheidze, Ushangi (1898-1953) - a prominent Georgian actor, a student of Kote Marjanishvili.

combination of emotion, speech and physical action in the performance of an actor was most important. According to Ushangi Chkheidze, Marjanishvili in his creative practice surpassed the theoretical works of Konstantin Stanislavski about acting.

“The views expressed by Stanislavski in the last years of his life. [...] From these views, we understand the importance he attached to physical actions of the actor. Marjanishvili was no longer alive at that time, otherwise he would have felt great joy as an artist, because the methods he applied and used to work with actors was justified by Stanislavski’s conclusions³⁴.”

Marjanishvili has staged performances of various genres and forms throughout his directing career. Most importantly, he never stopped at what he had already found, he was a director in constant search. For example, he staged Toller’s plays in various theatrical forms. The form found in *Masses Man* was no longer used in *Hoppla, We’re Alive!* Later, his student Sandro Akhmeteli developed mass-monumental theatrical forms or techniques in his performances. In *Hoppla, We’re Alive!*, Marjanishvili created portraits of person-characters, scrupulously worked on various scenes. Ushangi Chkheidze vividly describes the episode when revolutionary-minded prisoners are awaiting the execution. Marjanishvili made this scene very intimate and deep. The moment of smoking a tobacco-cigarette, which Toller had alluded to, became a focal point. He effectively played smoking cigarettes among the actor-characters and turned it into a symbol of victory over death for those awaiting execution.

Photo 4

The term eclecticism was used to refer to a field of art if it was “bad”. An example is an excerpt from the article “Theatre Absurd”. [...] “Epigonism. Dilettantism. Sitting between two chairs. Each play by Marjanishvili is eclectic sawdust: theatrical blackmail.”³⁵ It was written about Kote Marjanishvili in 1924,

³⁴ Chkheidze, Ushangi. Kote Marjanishvili Director and Leader. (წიგნი, უმანგი. კოტე მარჯანიშვილი რეჟისორი და ხელმძღვანელი). Tbilisi, pub. house Khelovneba (Art), 1949, 15-16.

³⁵ Theatre Absurd. (თეატრი აბსურდი). H2SO4. 1924, № 1, 46.

about a Georgian and not only Georgian theatre reformer. Paradoxically, the creators and authors of the magazine were in many ways his associates. I will repeat once again that Marjanishvili was much ahead of his time, therefore his contemporaries, even progressive thinkers, could not understand, could not perceive, could not appreciate the genius of Marjanishvili.

“What was the basis of Marjanishvili’s performances?” These were, first of all, the basic principles of synthetic theatre: the use of all fields of art in performances, [...] a well-trained actor against this background, [...] emotional fullness, festive character, colorfulness, theatrical optimism, refinement of the mise-en-scène; Often groups of sculptural character; The ultimate coordination of speech, gesture and movement, the wideness of the gesture, alteration of light and shade, the use of painting, music and lighting as elements organically included in the performance; Adding comic elements to the tragedy, [...] maximum relief of the stage and abundance of music, presentation of the work in rich colors, with a few strokes and without many details.”³⁶

In my opinion, this is the best example of modern theatre. Working in Ukraine, Russia or Georgia, Marjanishvili always looked for something new, constantly using various theatrical forms and techniques in staging classical or modern drama. One of the main motives of his work was study of the role and purpose of a person in the world, which was reflected, among other things, in his expressionist performances.

Illustrations:

1. *Gas* by Georg Kaiser, scenographer Kirill Zdanevich, 1923.
2. *Spiegelmensch* by Franz Werfel, scenographer Irakli Gamrekeli, 1923.
3. *Gas* by Georg Kaiser, costume design by Kirill Zdanevich, 1923.

³⁶ Chkheidze. Kote Marjanishvili Director and Leader, (ჩხეიძე. კოტე მარჯანიშვილი რეჟისორი და ხელმძღვანელი), 15-16.

4. *Masse Mensch* by Ernst Toller, scenographer Kirill Zdanevich, 1924. Scene from the performance, directed by Kote Marjanishvili, codirector Mikhail Koreli.

5. *Hoppla, We're Alive!* By Ernst Toller, scenographer David Kakakbadze, 1928. Scene from the performance, directed by Kote Marjanishvili.

(All illustrations are kept in the museums of the Shota Rustaveli National Academic Theater and the Marjanishvili State Academic Theater. Thanks to them for the opportunity to use the photo).

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Abstract: By the 20s of 20th century the expressionistic direction covered many areas of art, but it was more popular in German theatrical art. Expressionistic theatre is characterized by: expressing the ideas directly, abstract characters who are carriers of social functions. In dramaturgy, a person has become an addition to the profession chosen by himself/herself.

Kote Marjanishvili, the famous Georgian theatre director, throughout his creative career constantly searched for new theatrical forms and techniques. Therefore, it is not surprising that he not only staged works of expressionist playwrights first at the Rustaveli Theatre, and then at the Marjanishvili Theater, but he also used expressionist techniques of performance, scenographic

searches in combination with traditional Georgian theatre art. Marjanishvili staged plays of different genres or forms. Most importantly, he never stopped at what he once found. He was a director in constant search. Marjanishvili was the first who used cinematic techniques in Georgian theater.

Key words: Theatre, dramaturgy, Georgia, director, form, person, scenography.