

The *International Festival of Animation Theatre, 2010* begins

Theatre- Chronicles and Essays

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The International Festival of Animation Theatre, organized by the Țândărică Theatre in Bucharest, starts today, and will take place between November 26th and December 5th 2010. It is the 6th edition, a number that entitles us to forward the idea that a young tradition has been created over time by inventive and hearty organizers. It has already become an event appreciated by connoisseurs and discovered each year by a larger audience in search of original forms of theatrical expression. Indeed, for a week, the variety of direction approaches or specific means presented by Romanian and foreign performances, dedicated to children or adults, highlight the complexity of the genre. A short retrospective insight on 2009 edition underlines the syncretic trends displayed, whether it was about combining several forms of animation or different handling techniques.

As always, the productions signed by the tandem Cristian and Cristina Pepino occupy a special place. They focus and harmonize different elements of stage representation - actors on sight, computer animation, puppets and marionettes – in order to create the universe where the action takes place. On one hand, they allow the creation of an original link between the popular tradition and the cultured literature. The performance **Candide**, an exquisite loose adaptation of Voltaire, is eloquent to this regard. The old role of the puppeteers - to tell quite licentious stories in fairs and exhibitions - is thus (re)stated. On the other hand, when the two artists address children, their stage language helps them deal with the education topics introduced without pedantry and didacticism. These topica are, for example, the non-violence and the politeness in **Gulliver's Travels. A Voyage to Lilliput**, a performance which is also on the poster of the host Theatre.

The performance **The Tin Soldier** of the Vessel Theatre in Bulgaria is also known for combining several means of expression, even if they use less



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modern means and of a different nature. Nevertheless, in a register called post-modern, three interweaving stories were presented, each one with its heroes: actors on sight, bi-dimensional puppets, handled at apron or at table, or small marionettes. Keeping proportions, we can also place here the stage presentation of a semi-professional setting based on the tale **Tinerete fără bătrânețe și viață fără de moarte** (Unageing youth, deathless life). Made by a team of young people from Estonia, France, Spain and Romania, and coordinated by actress Eugenia Barbu, it resorts to the theatre of shadows and actors on sight, to puppets, sceneries, and costumes made using the Japanese paper folding technique called *origami*, live music and video projections. They all contributed to a stage play that had the commitment of the participants as the main quality. Some really stirring moments, such as the theatre of shadows or the scene when the beloved heaved in sight, came in addition to it..

Another category, an animation of objects, was **Things about Life**, the production of Trastam Theatre in Spain. Three actresses enlivened two pairs of glasses, some boxes of milk, a mop and a bucket, two towels, some balls of wool and knitting needles, three ladles. The expressiveness they gave tone to replaced the words, so that the mini-scenarios that presented episodes of daily life with humour and tenderness, energy or melancholy, were developing non-verbally.

In her turn, artist Laura Kibel from Teatro dei Piedi in Italy did not need words for the tales she told in her special style in the performance **Gone with the Feet**, a style which made her famous not only in her country but in the whole world. A few elements of costume or makeup turn her knees, hands, soles or fingers in yesterday's or today's characters, from here and there, who love each other, fight, quarrel, make peace, find each other again, sing, dance, dream... The different tasks each part of the body solves creates the fascinating possibility to suggest and control a quite large number of heroes, to capture the feature specific to each one of them.

The performance presented by the Theatre K3 in Poland is of a different category. The handling technique of the three actresses is extremely wrought and needs the intervention of more persons in order to animate a single hero. In the production **Etcetera**, the proper and figurative senses of some words such as 'marionette', 'rag', and 'manipulation' overlap. Puppets made of fabric and tow, their faces devoid of expression, submit with no possibility to resist to the cruel games the three women in black start and drive with clear satisfaction. Like the mythological Parcae, they hold in their



hands not only the wires with which they drive the creatures lacking the power to take decisions for themselves, but also those of their own transformation. They all end up by being caught in panoply like hunting trophies. The comparison with the frailty of human beings and their Sisyphus fight against an inexorable destiny is self-evident.

The examples can go on because the events programmed not only at the previous meeting of the puppeteers, but also at each edition of the International Festival of Animation from the Țândărică Theatre cover a large range of concerns of the genre. These performances, workshops, scenography exhibitions, book launches included in the programme of the 2010 edition, will prove it this year also. Regarding the in-house performances, important names of Romanian stage directors are to be noticed - Silviu Purcărete, Cristian Pepino, Gabriel Apostol sign a range of performances dedicated to children, inspired by famous texts in the universal and national literature. The performances for adults, inspired by no less famous plays, enjoy, also the extremely valuable contributions at direction level (Alexander Hausvater, Gavril Cadariu, Cristian Pepino, Valeriu Josan), at scenography level (Cristina Pepino, Constantin Ciubotariu, Epaminonda Tiotiu), at music level (Dan Bălan), at choreography level (Mălina Andrei) or at actor level. The 2010 edition of the International Festival of Animation Theatre promises high level artistic meetings that the audience of all ages will remember.

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