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On Stage

PROTAGONIST

REFORMER FOR ALL TIMES <Alyona Solntseva>

Theatre is a compromise, especially in Russia. The most outstanding theatre practitioners of the past decades from «thaw» to perestroika were invariably acting in the nature of compromise. The founder of the famous Theatre.doc in Moscow Mikhail Ugarov seems to be totally out of context of the Russian theatre. He hasn't become part of it and is reluctant to accept either its aesthetics or the byzantine laws. THEATRE has undertaken to trace the sources of this uncompromising position.

VIEWPOINT

WITHOUT THE AESOPIAN LANGUAGE <Yelena Levinskaya>

Is there the political theatre in Russia? Has there ever been one? And where can it be possibly found? While searching answers to these questions THEATRE discovered that the problems of political theatre in this country are related not to politics but essentially to aesthetics.

NEW NAMES

NOTHING TO BE SAID <Olga Shakina>

In her review of the political theatre in Russia Yelena Levinskaya mentioned one of the most apolitical and outwardly very young directors Dmitri Volkostrelov. THEATRE carries his express profile in order to figure out what today's apolitical insurgent looks like.

TREND

WHATEVER KIND OF BRECHT <Olga Fedyakina>

Brecht's «casus» ranks among the most complicated issues confronting the modern theatre. Brecht viewed the present in the light of the future that was to come as a result of total collapse of that very present. THEATRE presumes that it is precisely the shift of the perspective that strikes one's eye in any Brechtian production regardless of where it has been staged.

KUNSTKAMMER

HOW I SPENT VICTORY DAY <Anton Khitrov>

Endeavoring to find out whether there is the political theatre in modern Russia we remembered the Moscow Art Theatre named after Maxim Gorky. The loyalty to communist ideals and red flags apparently creates an affinity with Frank Kastorf's «Volksbühne». But this is where the likeness between the two leftist companies ends. THEATRE has found out how Tatiana Doronina's MAT marks the Victory Day and what the communists' blue bird of happiness looks like in the present-day Russian context.

BACKSTAGE INTERNATIONAL

LOOK BACK AT THE ANGERED <Julia Savikovskaya>

Playbills in Britain are these days featuring the plays by five European classics of the 1960-s: Harold Pinter, Peter Weis, George Osborn, Arnold Wesker and Edward Bond. In Britain where any revival is always a big event such coincidences occur very

rarely. THEATRE undertakes to find out how the new drama of the 60-s has gained second wind.

Off Stage

SCHOOL OF LITERACY

WHAT IS LEFTIST ART <Oleg Zintsov>

It is again very chic to be a left-winger in Russia. The protest movement has actualized the practices of actionism, the liberals are assimilating the revolutionary vocabulary while the twenty-year-olds having been born after the collapse of the USSR admire the revolutionary romanticism. In his interview for THEATRE a philosopher, culture expert and poet Keti Chukhrov elucidates the essentialities of the leftist theory and explains why «left-wing» and «modern» as applied to the arts have become synonyms while «protest» and «political» have not.

CLOSE-UP

PETER WEIS AND VOLKER BRAUN: TWO PLAYS ABOUT TROTSKY <Vladimir Kolyazin>

Leon Trotsky condemned by Stalinist propaganda as «Devil incarnate of counter-revolution» continued having hard times after perestroika too. Russian historians label him as another possible «re-embodiment of Stalin» and for the Russian theatre Trotsky has remained a preterition. THEATRE recounts two plays about Trotsky, until now not known in Russia and written by two outstanding German dramatists who offer quite an out-of-the-ordinary view of the ardent tribune of the revolution.

ANATOMY OF PRODUCTION

MUTATIONS OF «BERLUSPUTIN»: TRANSLATOR'S NOTES <Svetlana Belova>

When Italian playwright Dario Fo came up with the play «The Double-Headed Anomaly» about Silvio Berlusconi and Vladimir Putin he was sure it would never be staged in Russia and not for the political reasons. THEATRE asked one of the participants in the work on the Russian version of the play entitled «BerlusPutin» to comment on how it feels to be «lost in translation».

THE LEGEND

THE IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF L. E. F.: A HISTORY OF ONE UTOPIA <Christina Matvienko>

Why the leftist art in the country of winning revolution was allowed such a brief period of existence? THEATRE tries to answer this question by looking into the history of L. E. F. (Left Front of Arts) and of its transient romance with the Soviet power.

Beyond the Stage

VIEWPOINT

AN ABRIDGED HISTORY OF ARTS RESISTANCE <Leonid Alexandrovsky>

What is political art and how is it distinguished from lampoons and manifestos? To answer these questions THEATRE picked up the most spectacular moments from the long history of arts resistance.

PARALLELS

TRIER AND BRECHT. THE DIALECTICAL MOVIE-THEATRE <Zara Abdullayeva>

The fact that Lars von Trier succeeds to Brecht became obvious after «Dogville» where the parallels between the two film-makers' creative methods are all too apparent. THEATRE asked a film critic and the author of the concept of post-documentalism to speak about the underlying connections between Brecht's and Trier's aesthetics that became manifest before «Dogville».

EXCURSUS

THEATRE BETWEEN TABLES <Mark Kushnirov>

While searching for the roots and sources of the political theatre we turned to the history of such specific genre as cabaret. With all the spectacular take-offs of «The Bat» and perfect elegance of «Le Chat Noir» cabaret didn't become part and parcel of the theatrical culture neither in Russia nor in France, whereas in Germany it was precisely the tradition of political cabaret cultivated by Wedekind and Brecht that not only fecundated the entire modern German theatre but in a large measure shaped its distinctive image.

RETROSPECTION

A FEW NIGHTS IN THE THEATRE TO EVOLVE FROM FUTURISM TO FASCISM <Dmitry Savosin>

We are inclined to think that political theatre and leftist movement are twin-brothers.

Meanwhile a major contribution to the development of this form of theatre was made by personalities of the ultra right-wing orientation. THEATRE reminds of the first actions undertaken by the founders of futurism, introduces the reader into some of their plays and recounts the sad story of how Italian futurism became an aesthetic showcase for fascism.

Yellow Pages

THEATRE has polled some well-known Moscow directors and artistic managers asking them one and the same question: «What is political theatre?» The answers at least to some extent elucidate the underlying reason for the traditional escapism of the Russian theatre.

Text

THEATRE carries Dmitry Prigov's previously unpublished play «CATHARSIS, OR THE COLLAPSE OF EVERYTHING SACRED».