

Alytus
Theatre

The Lithuania–Russia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020 (hereinafter – the Programme) has been developed within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Instrument and is being co-financed by the European Union (hereinafter – EU) and the Russian Federation. The Programme will promote and broaden the cross-border cooperation (hereinafter – CBC) between the border regions of Lithuania and Russia, which so far has been pursued under the 2004–2006 TACIS Neighbourhood Programme Lithuania–Poland–Russia and 2007–2013 European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument CBC Programme Lithuania–Poland–Russia.

The project LT-RU-2-063 "Building bridges: tourism & culture development in Sovetsk and Alytus"

The aim of the project is to improve the tourist attractiveness of Alytus and Sovetsk cities by developing cultural ties and preserving the regional cultural traditions. 2 partners – Kaliningrad region youth theatre "Molodyozhnyj" and Alytus City Theatre, combine forces to increase the number of tourists and visitors to the cultural sites of both regions. Partners shall conduct a series of cross-border culture events for tourists and local citizens.*

* This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. Only Alytus City Theater is responsible for the contents of this publication and it cannot be considered as reflecting the views of the European Union.



Funded by
the European Union



LITHUANIA - RUSSIA
CBC 2014-2020

**ALYTAUS
MIESTO
TEATRAS**

Alytus Theatre

Compiler DARIUS BABIJONAS

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means.

Bibliographic information of the publication is provided by the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library National Bibliographic Data Bank (NBDB).

© Alytus City Theatre, 2020

© Compiling, Darius Babijonas, 2020

ISBN 978-609-95225-1-7

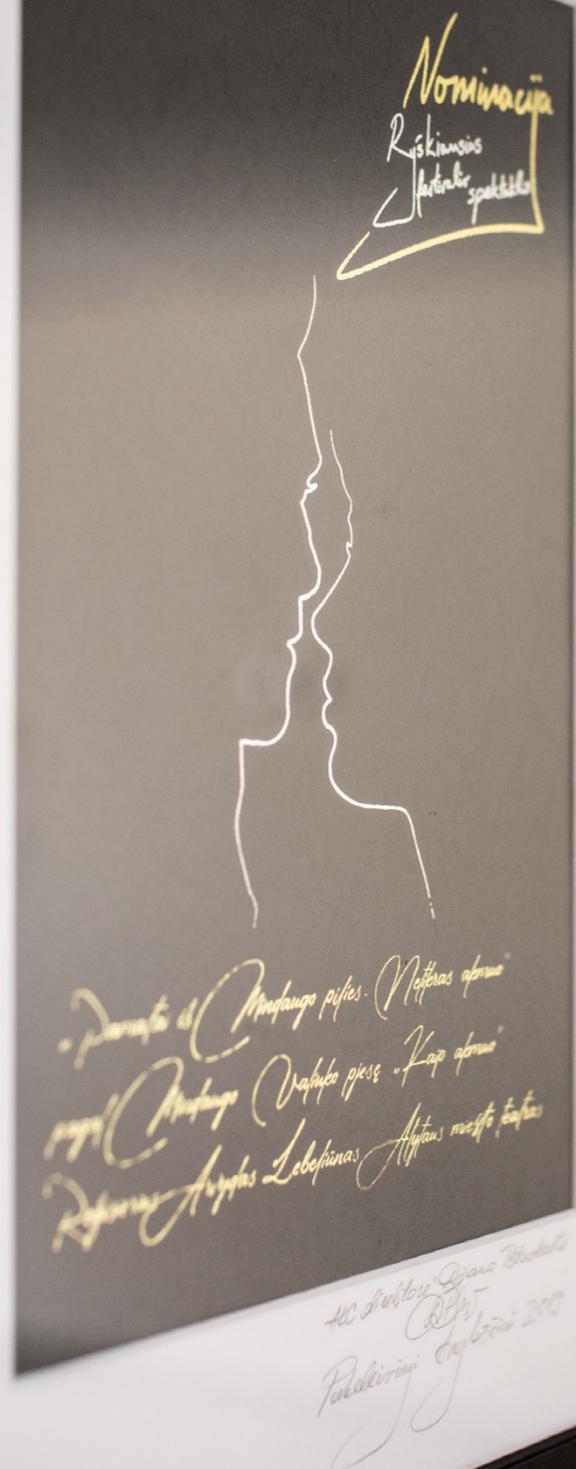
**ALYTAUS
MIESTO
TEATRAS**

2020

Acknowledgment (instead of introduction)

On behalf of the authors, for the time devoted to access to the stored information, for the resources required for the topics of the book "Alytus Theater" we say "thank you" to Alytus Jurgis Kunčinas Public Library, Alytus District Municipality Public Library, Kaunas County Public Library, Alytus Branch of Kaunas Regional State Archive and the main culprit of the publication – Alytus City Theater and its staff. We are grateful to the language editor Daiva Gaskiene, the photographers who gave the photo archives and everyone else who contributed to the book in one way or another.

We say "thank you" to all the interlocutors who shared their thoughts and personal photos, as well as those who answered, but of their own volition their thoughts have so far remained outside the door of this book.



Nominacija
Raskianus
Historinis spaudimas

„Dramatis il Mondango pifias. Nefteras almus“
1999 Mondango Vaiduko pjesė „Kapo almus“
Rafaras Arūpas Lelepinas Alytaus miesto teatras

HC Daktaras Jovana Bledis
Publikavimui rugpjūtį 2009



Content

Instead of an introduction	5	Julius Sabatauskas	96
What is today's Alytus city theater	8	Dalia Radzvilienė	98
It could be here. If only the pictures could speak	14	Artūras Šimonis	102
To create a cozy, quiet corner that way	17	Gintarė Markevičienė	108
The Silent Revolution of Saulius Juškis	20	Indrė Puišytė-Šidlauskienė	114
Loreta Liausaitė	23	Petras Lisauskas	116
Vytautas V. Stanionis	26	Albertas Vidžiūnas	118
Inesa Pilvelytė	28	Arvydas Lebeliūnas	122
Arvydas Kinderis	30	Andra Kavaliauskaitė	128
Vidmantas Ežerskis	36	Inesa Pilvelytė	134
Vytautas Skruibys	40	"Emperor John the Heartless"	140
Jonas Gaižauskas	44	"Theater House in the Land of Snowy Refrigerators"	142
Eugenijus Rakauskas	50	The story of Beatrice	144
Aurelija Vaivadaite	52	Alytus wants to create a professional theater	150
Ona Gudaitytė	56	A (non) childish manifesto	154
Aldona Balalienė	60	From a (non) critic's Facebook	164
Liudas Ramanauskas	64	"Theater Stones"	167
Tomas Kunčinas	66	To the "Golden Stage Cross". Theater awards	171
Robertas Šarknickas	72	Winners of Alytus festivals	174
Audingas Aleknavičius	74	Playwrights competition	179
Vaidas Praspaliauskas	76	All performances of Alytus City Theater	180
Vincas Vaičiulis	82	"Touring places in Lithuania"	189
Sigitas Jakubauskas	86	Alytus... Chicago. Geography of foreign tours	197
Paata Tsikolia	90	Patriotic duty of Alytus citizen	198
Oganes and Rūta	94		



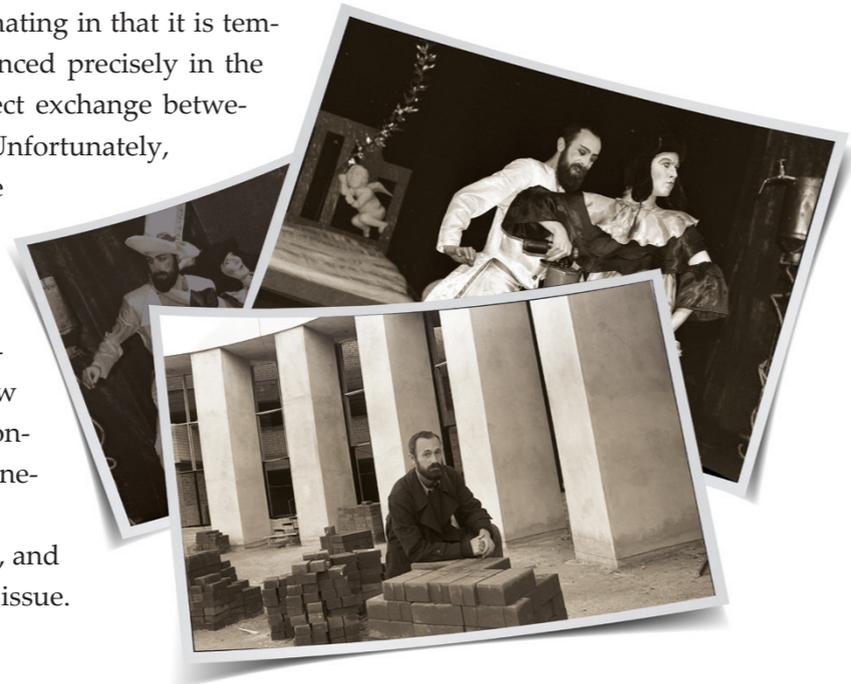
The Theatre that has Overgrown its Clothes

Andrius Jevsejevas

When thinking how to start this text reflecting on what Alytus City Theatre, which celebrates the thirtieth season of its creative life, is today, I inevitably face the phenomenon of time. Surely, nobody would be surprised with the conclusion that time is relative and in theatre this conditionality of time is very expressive and mighty. It allows both the actor and viewer to learn about a month-long literary history in just a few hours, to live the lives of characters that seem to go on for many years, or, conversely, to experience the fullness of a boring moment when there is no exchange of ideas nor energies between the stage and the auditorium for one reason or another.

The miracle of theatre is fascinating in that it is temporary, unfolding and is experienced precisely in the present moment, during the direct exchange between the actor and the spectator. Unfortunately, the greatest strength of the theatre is also the greatest tragedy of this branch of art, because any attempt to grasp it, move it to another, more sustainable medium that is less sensitive to the flow of time and analyse it is pre-condemned to turn it into a kind of one-day pin-pierced butterfly agony.

But time in theatre is one thing, and theatre in time is totally another issue.



Once, when I was actively involved in theatrical criticism, trying to analyse the 'hot' phenomena of theatrical creation, I used to think of the theatrical performance in the way that I would think of a man, composed of many conflicting, but complementary, and in any case, interwoven personalities, leitmotifs, characters, elements of the form and content, as well as of stylistic and genre fragments. Because the performance, like a man, it is as it is, or more precisely, as it is seen and perceived by the observer. From a similar angle, I will try to look at the only professional drama theatre in Southern Lithuania, which started three decades ago, mainly by theatre lovers and enthusiasts, and today openly expresses its ambitions to become a state institution of professional stage arts.

Just as you will never know everything about a person, perhaps critical reflection cannot cover all aspects of the creative life of the theatre as well. Today, I know Alytus City Theatre as a space where, in addition to the main repertoire, which, I admit, is still largely a mystery to me, and what I saw did not impress me so much; there is a great deal of bold, inventive, open and creative activities focused on the development of the idea of theatre as a community home. In general, today's stage of development of Alytus Theatre as a municipal cultural institution reminds me of a kind of adolescence. And adolescence, in addition to a certain chaos of emerging identity, is characterised by difficult-to-manage energy, not always measured ambition, boundless enthusiasm, a need for community, and a moderate tendency to rebel.



This is the kind of Alytus Theatre that I have known for many years as a member of the commission, spectator or participant. The comedy festival 'Com•media', which in just five or six years, from a rather stereotypically and inertly shaped entertainment event, has become, in my opinion, at least in the context of republican theatre festivals, a solid, conceptual event that quite boldly questions the boundaries of the comedy genre. Participation in it is finally no longer an obligation for professional theatres of the country to make reports to the authorities for support with the distribution of performances in the

regions, but instead a real creative challenge with an enthusiastic, consciously educated, and therefore a relatively educated and demanding audience.

ties for support with the distribution of performances in the regions, but instead a real creative challenge with an enthusiastic, consciously educated, and therefore a relatively educated and demanding audience.

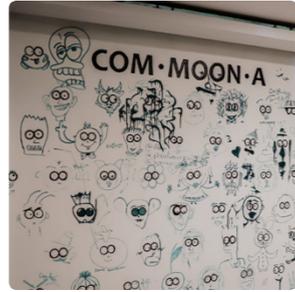
An even closer connection with Alytus Theatre, its creative staff, administration and audience was established from the very first night's art events, 'Com•moon•os', organised by the theatre, which showed not so much the current artistic or social direction of the theatre but further theatrical aesthetic development and audience developmental potential. Starting from the relatively cautious performance of several more expressive plays and youthful music groups, which were still shy and had a smaller audience turnout than that of theatrical nightclubs who jumped 'not on their own sledges', 'Com•moon•a' expanded over time, becoming bolder and freer until it actually turned into a multi-genre and interdisciplinary night-time session of theatrical events, during which the city's youth and a rather large group of older spectators, who were not afraid of youthful freshness, would watch the intense and dynamic panorama of the new Lithuanian theatre with quite high artistic aspirations. Not only would they observe, but they would also actively participate until dawn, exchanging ideas, energy, smiles, and constructive criticisms.

I think that in a sense this 'one-night-long adventure', which has already become a tradition, influenced the aesthetic direction of Alytus Theatre even more than the main programme of the comedy festival. I am sure that the most successful artistic collaboration of the theatre



with the actress and director has emerged from the energy nucleus, formed in the 'commune Andra Kavaliauskaitė, who brought home the first Golden Stage Cross in the history of the theatre last year. And although, I will admit, I am not a big fan of A. Kavaliauskaitė's performances, currently working in the theatre as an art director, as I see a number of shortcomings in professionalism, naivety and not always a responsible approach to the analysed topics in her works. However, with the mono-performances of this creator, Alytus Theatre has taken a significant step forward, not so much in the aesthetic or artistic growth of the repertoire, but as in the sense of consistent work with the target audience and public education. Because, as I think many theatre directors would confirm, it is always much more difficult to grow an audience than to create a sustainable and even theatrical repertoire - no matter how interconnected these two elements of theatre creation may be, no matter how paradoxical such a separation and hierarchization may sound.

However, with such rapid growth, expanding the arsenal of artistic communication with the public, strengthening the theatre infrastructure and securing solid technical possibilities for the implementation of more complex artistic solutions, the theatre management and communication have significantly strengthened, and so, the repertoire as a dress has overgrown, in a sense, and remains the greatest weakness of today's Alytus Theatre. Strengthening the troupe, refining the aesthetic direction of the theatre, employing a stricter and more demanding artistic selection, as well as more active involvement of talented young theatre professionals in the theatre activities, would probably be the next step that would allow Alytus theatre to progress and develop from puberty to inevitably marked adolescence.



Probably the most striking sign of adolescent inconsistency and insecurity in the theatre is the extremely frequent, but not always, at least from a foreign point of view, purposeful and justified change of artistic directors. During the last five years, the director of the theatre Inesa Pilvelytė has changed four of them: Albertas Vidžiūnas, Petras

Lisauskas, Arvydas Lebeliūnas and A. Kavaliauskaitė, who is now drawing the artistic route of the theatre but seems to be more focused on her individual work. Without going into too much detail and detailing the achievements of each of them, I rhetorically ask: can an artist-practitioner, inevitably focusing on their own work, be at the same time an active observer of the local and foreign theatre market, organise the creative work of the theatre troupe – which has not yet proved its artistic value – engage in the improvement of the professional skills of the actors, and not close the theatre in the frame of aesthetics, no matter how effective it may be? In the end, isn't that fear of a certain artistic competition? Because, at least from the outside, sometimes the theatre seems to be ready for major artistic challenges in terms of technical, infrastructural and administrative preparation, but the professional training, lack of experience and skills of the creative staff still prohibit us from taking a solid step forward.

Consistently working with the troupe of actors, raises new creative challenges for it, investing in professional development, intensifying cooperation with artists operating in the non-governmental sector, taking bold co-production processes, organising artist residencies, sharing available infrastructural, technical, administrative resources, exchanging new ideas, untried forms of stage creation, opportunities for more purposeful and consistent exchange of professional experience with colleagues living a slightly different, but no less creative and certainly much more intense life on the stages of various theatres of the country. After all, it is the creations of independent artists and troupes that are currently lacking when many theatres have not yet completed the major repairs of their sites, and the effective use of their own spaces is well known by the Alytus City Theatre team and this can be seen from the festivals, such as 'Com•moon•a', which uses almost every corner of the theatre to satisfy the curiosity of the youthful audience. I have no doubt the active festival, educational, diplomatic-lobbying activities of the theatre, which in one way or another involve almost all sections of society, and apparently, only the growing attention of the local audience, suggest that the theatre is able to develop one or more aesthetic directions of theatre even more intensively, dynamically, purposefully and boldly.

Following a major change in the entire generation of theatre managers over the last decade, almost capital overhaul of theatre infrastructure with European and local investments, and a significant increase in technical capabilities, there have been some such changes in the state and municipal theatre market. Although not as much of a change as the greatest



"Angels of Scrooge Street" (Eugenijus Rakauskas, Ona Gudaitytė, Eglė Juškaitė, Jonas Gaižauskas and Vidas Vaškius)

optimists might have hoped. Many, I think, will agree that probably the only Lithuanian National Drama Theatre has grown the fastest, achieved the best artistic results and ventured into international waters, but positive changes have still taken place elsewhere as well. In my subjective opinion, many good changes have taken place in the Klaipėda Drama Theatre, Lithuanian Russian Drama Theatre and the State Youth Theatre.

I think that Alytus City Theatre is one of the few professional performing arts institutions whose activities can be discussed in terms of a qualitative breakthrough. I would say that over the last few years, Alytus City Theatre has seemed to have progressed out of the local bubble of the hometown and municipality and has become a solid, significant player in our theatre market. And if the theatrical repertoire of Alytus, based on rather dubious artistic criteria and lacking a certain dramatic approach and aesthetic consistency, does not allow Alytus residents to rise to the leaders of our country's theatre, but Alytus City Theatre has already really grown, and some of the provincial state theatres have probably already been overtaken by it.

This theatre is not a sanctuary. It seems that the current management of the theatre does not set such goals for themselves. It is not a theatre-home either: it is rather an open, communal space, where not only the city's old intelligentsia, but also the ideas and initiatives of young people come together under one roof. Here the great geniuses of the last century of our theatre, did not create, this theatre seems to have no legend of its own. And this, I think, is probably the greatest strength of Alytus City Theatre and hope that by consistently working, not declaring changes, but taking them fairly boldly as real, without fear of making mistakes and learning from one's own and others' mistakes, the theatre slowly but surely becomes a leader among municipal theatres with the ambition, creative freshness and enthusiasm to go one step further.

Around one photo: "It could have been a square with a Lenin monument, not a theater..."

Darius Babijonas

"Yes, sometimes when I'm in the small theater hall, I think: maybe it's a sandy yard where I played, maybe rooms with high ceilings, where being alone was scary sometimes", Aušra Žvinakevičiūtė-Stankevičienė shares her memories. Last time in the mentioned hall she watched the performance "Tūla, or we are an occupied country" from the repertoire of Alytus theatricals.

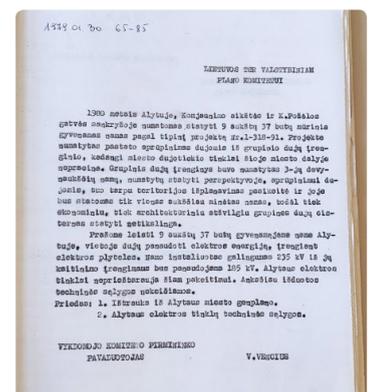
"Linus Jakštonis is sitting there, on Vytautas's photo, on the bench," Aušra notes. Linas, who was asked to move to the day the photo was taken, admits that he did not see that the photographer Vytautas V. Stanionis was taken the picture. Then he lived nearby, on Karolis Požėla Street, and there was his favorite corner, he often sat down here, like other Alytus residents, such as the girls in the photo eating ice cream. True, people did not meet on the street, only at the post office, where everyone gathered, in the "Nemunas", "Žuvintas" or other cafes...

Around 1984, when this photo was taken, Linas already wrote, worked in the Alytus Experimental House Construction Factory (AEHCF) newspaper "Industry Road", with the editor Juozas Vainas, and there were four years left until the publication of the newspaper "Alytus Movement" (Linas later took over the newspaper management from the same V. V. Stanionis). A few years later, "Alytus Movement" became Alytus' weekly newspaper called "Provincija". It was exactly the same name and symbol as the theater, led by director Gintaras Nasutavičius, introduced itself to the audience. G. Nasutavičius also gave this name to the newspaper (Jurgis Kunčinas wrote to it) and the publishing house (German-translated children's literature and other books by Teodoras Četrauskas were printed here). Linas remembers that Saulius Bartkus had already created at the AEHCF cultural base, and Jonas Gaižauskas started his activity with the pantomime.



"... meanwhile the layout of the territory has changed and only one of the above-mentioned houses was built ..." (instead of three), this nine-floor building can be seen in the photo

In the place where Linas and other Alytus youth of that time are sitting in the photo, there is now a city theater building, a ticket office and a radio. The lady in the photo, walking down the path near the flower gardens and carrying bags, would be near the theater building today, previously there was a market, further – "Dailė" shop and self-service canteen, and on the corner – a dairy, next to it – the old Music School. "Maybe there are 'pits' in this sequence," apologizes Aušra, who grew up in the second house of Communist Youth Square (now – Town Hall) for almost five years, later she and her parents moved to a cooperative apartment building on Vasilijus





Alytus Theater and City Hall. Drawing by Zenonas Bulgakovas, 2008

Jemeljanovas (now – Vingis) Street. The Nasutavičius Theater set up its stage in the basement of this building.

"In 1984, I moved to Vilnius, and when I returned to Alytus, I went to my aunt's place. She lived in the new place, not where the Alytus Theater is now," Aušra recalls.

She and Linas remembered the demolition of old buildings in the square and the reluctance of the officials of that time to preserve the old town, as well as the destruction of a city park lot. In place of the old buildings, new ones began to appear in the center, and the tallest was the nine-storey building, which is now located almost in the "yard" of the city's theater.

"In 1980, in Alytus, at the intersection of Communist Youth Square and Karolis Požėla Street, a 9-storey 37-apartment brick residential house is planned to be built," Vytautas Venčius, Deputy Chairman of the Alytus City Executive Committee, wrote to the Lithuanian State Planning Committee in early 1979.

The center of Alytus would have been destroyed even more painfully, fortunately, the planning of the territory has changed and the only one, instead of three nine-storey ones, "planned to be built in perspective" has emerged. It is not difficult to predict that with the construction of three buildings, the theater would not fit here or would have been designed in different way, it was true, that there were plans to build other buildings as well. "There used to be garages here, the authorities asked them to demolish them, explaining that there will be a square with a monument to Lenin," reminded writer and doctor Birutė Margarita Griškevičienė.

To have a cosy quiet place...

Darius Babijonas

'The building of the Alytus City Theatre, like the new city government house, had to be built in the new city district', remembers Edvinas Jurevičius, the long-term chief architect of Alytus City Municipality.



The architect, who graduated in 1975 and was appointed to work in Alytus, remembers that the plan of the new city district in the capital of Dzūkija originated and coincided with the time period where Alytus became a city of republican subordination in 1977 - in the same year, the Sports Palace and a polyclinics were built in almost the same place, and also a cinema, but not yet a theatre, was already working nearby.

'Performing is a small consolation. Everyone wants to act well... Working conditions are poor. A new palace of culture is being designed, there is not enough space in the old ones and these are being renovated... In the worst case, the theatre will work from Nekrašas' apartment tomorrow, and the actor's house will be full of the sounds of amateurs the next evening... To have a cosy quiet place', Onutė Baldauskaitė wrote in 1977, in the article 'Which way will the theatre turn?' in the newspaper, 'Communist Tomorrow'.

According to E. Jurevičius, the theatre, city municipality and other new buildings were to emerge in the fields near these new buildings, behind the current Jazminų Street Market. The reasons why the theatre was not built in this new city district could have been determined in one way or another by the decisions of Vilnius.

Alytus, which became a city of republican subordination in 1977, grew very sharply and rapidly until its 400th anniversary (1981), and in 1982, it received the Minutes No. 13, signed by Ringaudas Songaila, Prime Minister of the Council of Ministers. Although it declared the approval of the general plan of Alytus city, the Council of Ministers seemed to 'order' the end of the previously unregulated population growth in the city to the Local Plan Commission and the Board of Construction and Architecture.

'When creating the detailed planning and construction of the city of Alytus, the intention is to find an opportunity to reduce the mechanical growth of the population', R. Songaila confirmed in writing, and the then mayor, Alfonsas Grigaitis, was instructed to follow.





E. Jurevičius says that he does not remember the instruction to stop the growth of the city, but in some way the development of the new city district stopped, which is supported by the empty fields behind the Jazminų Street market to this day.

‘According to the approved city development master plan, a place for a new collective farm market in the new city district centre has been allocated’, wrote A. Grigaitis, chairman of Alytus City Executive Committee in a 1982-year document, instructing the young market to use the Grodno (Belarus) city market and pavilion project.

According to E. Jurevičius, upon the above-mentioned master plan, by the year 2000, 100,000 people had to live in the capital of Dzūkija, and the creation of the new town district was based on the desire to preserve what was left of the old city in Alytus.

Preservation plans had apparently changed when A. Grigaitis, a long-time mayor, was replaced in 1985 by Nijolė Januškevičienė, the editor of ‘Communist Tomorrow’, who wished a new executive house (town hall) to be not in Alytus new town district near other new buildings, but in the old city near the party committee.

The wishes of the attendees of the future city hall (later renamed Nijolė’s Church, and due to the similarity of the tower to the Slavic tale was called ‘Jemelia’s Furnace’) also led to changes in city planning, as well as the fact that the theatre building did not appear in the new city district, but was crammed into the territory of the former Communist Youth (until 1954, the Market Square) near the new city government houses. With the approval of the Alytus City Council of People’s Deputies, these had begun to be designed in 1985 by architect Saulius Juškis. Instead of the old square and the buildings in it, he designed a whole series of new buildings, such as the municipal palace, the theatre, the engineers’ house and the marriage palace, which were not built.

Actress Vaiva Mainelytė’s brother, architect Algirdas Mainelis, also took part in the contest, but his pro-



posal to preserve the city square with the old buildings and build an authority house on or near the site of the current Nemunas shopping centre did not receive much support.

The construction of the city hall took place from 1986 to 1989. The theatre, designed by the same S. Juškis, together with designers Irma Bartkutė and Violeta Simonavičiūtė in 1987–1989, opened its doors for the first time later (1996) and immediately the small hall was awarded in the inspection-competition, ‘The Best Project of the Year’ organised in Kaunas.

It is interesting that the appearance of several other buildings in the capital of Dzūkija is also related to the creative environment of the theatre’s architect. St Kęstutis Kisielius, who designed the Mykolas Žilinskas Picture Gallery in Kaunas with S. Juškis, who won the contest for the project of the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary with colleagues. He is also considered an architect of Alytus Sports Palace (with Vytautas Jurgis Dičius).

These buildings have not only similar architectural features, but they also have various ‘fa- te’ features in common. The consecration of the church took 10 years from the beginning of construction, and the theatre was built for 21 years before the ‘consecration’ of the great hall. For an even longer period of time – 22 years – from the day when the theatres moved to create on the 1st floor of the city hall, the building was finally marked with the thematic billboard, ‘Alytus City Theatre’, which was employed by Alytus architect Laimis Kaziukonis in the sun (and moon) light. This ended a decades-long discussion with designers as to whether the theatre building could be decorated with the name of the theatre.

Alytus Drama Theatre. Silent Revolution of S. Juškis

Audrys Karalius

Alytus has long no doubts about its urban nature and the competence of its great Dzūkija's capital ambition. For twenty years, huge masonry houses had been 'planted', but there was no real atmosphere of the city. Alytus rather reminded one of the breeder's bed, where various plants are germinated, hoping to later transplant them 'to the right place'. The problem was mitigated by the beautiful landscape and forest. The forest 'came' all the way to the city centre and was the first to 'see' a simple but necessary element of the city – an ensemble. It appeared slowly by changing and purifying itself, as well as getting stuck and reviving again.

The competition, which was won in the early 80s, highlighted the most important features of the square and the buildings (architects Saulius Juškys and Kęstutis Kisielius). Saulius Juškys later designed and built* the town hall, which liberated itself from outright postmodernism (a competitive variant) and with its tower, reminded the distant cousin of the Military Museum in Kaunas rather than the Aldorian 'pencils'. This was S. Juškis' first victory over material and fashion. The drama theatre was designed together with the Town Hall Square by 'touching' the whole parterre and performing a lot of work that could not be seen, which the workshop calls 'bringing into the system'. This means that not only the given object was visible, but also the adjacent buildings, their volumes, stylistics and functional connections, as well as the space surrounding these buildings. The 'gluing' of the system is the hardest job, and not every master is capable of it.



This is an uncommon case where we can talk about a good system. S. Juškis' ensemble 'plays'. The drama theatre was completed calmly, without much emotion nor saying much. S. Juškys forms almost half of the square's evolvent. The architect avoided cold formality, but also does not 'crush'. A rather simple facade is made in the only place, at the main entrance, and comprises of a majestic half-yard. A collisional triangular colonnade plays

*Architect jargon.

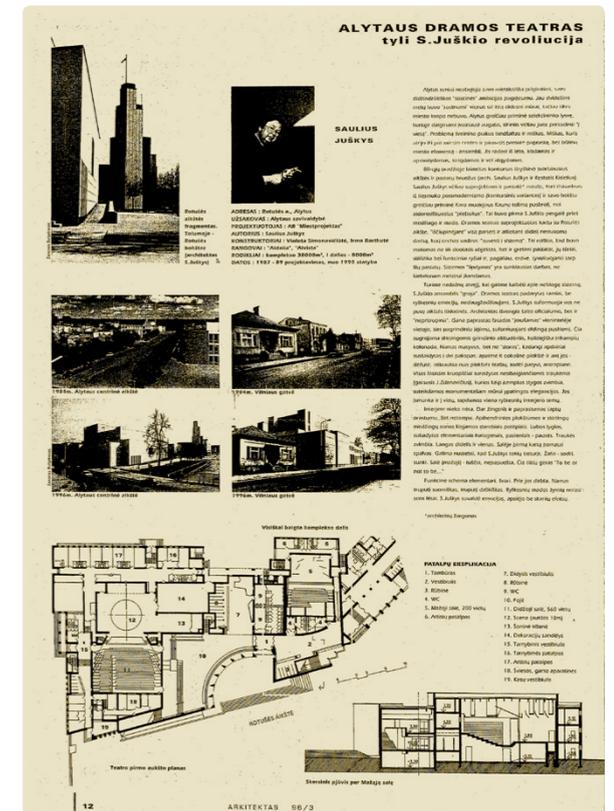
here with different pavement altitudes. The house is massive, but not 'heavy' as it is carefully divided into two layers: the bottom and the base plate with a box on it, separated from the edges of the plate and, therefore, it is passive and secondary. The entire facade is carefully carved with endless rods (the famous J. Zdanavičius), which buzz like tense strings giving the monumental masonry a special elegance. They also penetrate inwards and become one of the brightest interior accents.

There is nothing in the interior. One more step, and simplicity would make the whole piece inferior. But it doesn't. Generalised planes and areas of different materials are laid with large, sweeping touches. Ceilings are smooth, equipped with simple halogens, and pauses at the walls. The rods are buzzing. There is one large window. You can see colours in the hall for the first time. It is surprising that S. Juškys still has it as such. Green is rich and heavy. The hall (the small one) is empty, not decorated. Here you could say "To be or not to be...".

The functional scheme is simple and clear. It was worked on. The house is a bit Finnish and a bit reminiscent of Dzūkija. There are no outstanding fashion signs – it will age slowly. S. Juškys controlled his emotions and managed to sculpt it without 'delicious' effects.



In the architectural ensemble next to the theater building, the vacant place (instead of the engineers' house) has not been filled so far. It was covered with a tent with symbolic windows looking at the town hall



Fragmnet from a publication in the magazine "Arkitektas", 1996 No. 3 Address: Rotušės str., Alytus. Client: Alytus City Municipality Designer: AB "City project" Author: Saulius Juškys Constructors: Violeta Simonavičiūtė, Irma Bartkutė Contractors: "Aldaila", "Alvista" Indicators: complex - 38000 m³, part I - 8000 m³ Dates: 1987–1989 design, since 1990, construction



“Beatrice, run”
(Loreta Liausaitė, Inesa Pilvoelytė)

Loreta Liausaitė. I wanted to write a book about Alytus Theatre

With the performance, ‘Cain and Abel’, I returned to the theatre after a long break. All those years were a renunciation of the theatre. This is a process. It’s not as simple as you saying: ‘I’m not going to do performances anymore, and it’s all over.’ That clenched tail of creation drags after you for years; it tortures, squeaks, contradicts, moralises... Time overcomes it, you count the years and you understand: ‘yes, it’s all over, it’s been six years’ – enough time to forget all the things you learned in the past.

I got into the trap of my own circumstances; I applied for a state scholarship and I wanted to compile a book about the development of theatrical art in Alytus from the amateur rifle theatre in 1933 to the present day, which is a huge field of research that helps to restore and preserve the cultural identity of a small town. I also added the creation of a chamber performance to the main part of the project. I was awarded a scholarship to create a performance!

I don’t believe in coincidences - those traps were waiting for me. So, I had to create a performance. From scratch... in an empty space. According to Peter Brook, ‘a person walks through space, someone else watches him – that’s all it takes for the action in the theatre to begin.’ To get started – yes, but what does it take to make it happen? I had already forgotten this. Hopefully, the actors will forgive me for I tortured them with my blind remarks. This performance should be seen as a debut. ‘We only know what to do when the ritual descends to a level we can comprehend.’ (P. Brook). ‘It’s not always ‘descended...’. We wanted to create a number of ritual



Loreta Liausaitė (1961–2015), director and actress of Alytus City Theater 1990–2015. Like the founders of the city theater studio Arvydas Kinderis, Dalia Kimantaitė and Irena Alperytė, the director of one of the first performances in Alytus (The Taste of Honey), Loreta acquired her profession at the Moscow State Cultural Institute. L. Liausaitė, who sacrificed more than 25 years for Alytus, always encouraged her colleagues with her different, but subtly, culturally presented approach, which became an indisputable alternative to the then rather conservative directing traditions of the Alytus scene



scenes: the first bloodshed, purification, humiliation, but not with everything worked out. And those failures seem to ask for another attempt at success. I will probably try again in spring. Touching the story of Ingmar Bergman's mother and daughter.

The ancestors are very close to us, nearby, and they breathe on our backs. Cain and Abel - an archetype perceived as an idea, a symbolic figure. After reading 16 verses of myths, we could talk for hours and hours about Jealousy, Sin, Punishment, Faith, the Price Sign, Exile... We will address ethical and existential issues as these are cultural texts, the

understanding of which is based, in part, on our subconscious experience. I bring the Biblical story to my everyday survival and try to use it as an accessory to my life. Everyday.

I feel sorry for those who are angry. Anger destroys. I am very interested in family life, the strongest and closest circle of human communion in which we are so often imprisoned. It is like the primordial matter in which the most important processes take place. There is a Latin saying, 'Suffer the small inconveniences caused by loved ones.' I narrow the Biblical story to the signs and ideas that I can recognise. This is how the character of the Mother appeared - Eve longing for the lost paradise, the little Eve, the sign of tabula rasa, quietly looking at herself getting old in her dreams. I sentenced Cain to a straightforward and moralizing implication - it was very important for me to express and then discuss my views on exile.

Exile is a broad concept - exile can live in us without crossing the doorstep. This is a topic you will want to return to. In the performance, it is only marked - exile is regarded as a higher punishment than even death. According to Vytautas Kavolis, 'the exile is a symbol of human history, and especially of the industrial age'. I don't know the statistics, but probably at least every third family has such experiences.

The original idea of the performance was similar to social TV shows, newspaper articles, namely domestic violence, children's experiences and bullying. The public information space bombards the consciousness and you want to be relevant, keeping up with the events and problems taking place at the present. I was interested in the practice of social theatre. Ten years ago, I became acquainted with the methodology of creating a problematic children's theatre by Swedish director Suzanne Osten, and I admired her ideas. Probably, Christmas tales for the kids have become boring. Now, in creating 'Cain and Abel', I hoped to follow the principles of therapeutic drama. Filming the children's rooms, collecting their experiences, rehearsing with the children, and then translating everything that we had learnt on to the stage. I'm glad these attempts failed, and I left it all to the TV shows - They do it much better than me.

Inside, something was very opposed to it, it was like a child's betrayal - to take advantage of his drama and try to replicate it to others by covering it up in public spaces, hiding under art forms. So, I chose the other path. I have collected stories, but no one in the text of the



"Cain and Abel. Daily Death" (Jonas Gaižauskas, Ona Gudaitytė and Tomas Kunčinas)

performance will now understand whose experiences it is. Except for daughter Julija. Once sitting during the rehearsal, she shouted: 'But, Mom, it was me who told you that!...'

In the fable of the performance, six days of the life of one family remained, getting closer to the ever-approaching threshold of the seventh day of death. The plot is simple: mother, two sons and father who is expected to return. Sons hope to change their lives, break free from the circle of the parents' family, and create their own, different lives. My Cain is a man who experiences unlove, he collects evidence of the lack of love shown towards him like crumbs - I am not loved now and even then they did not love me.

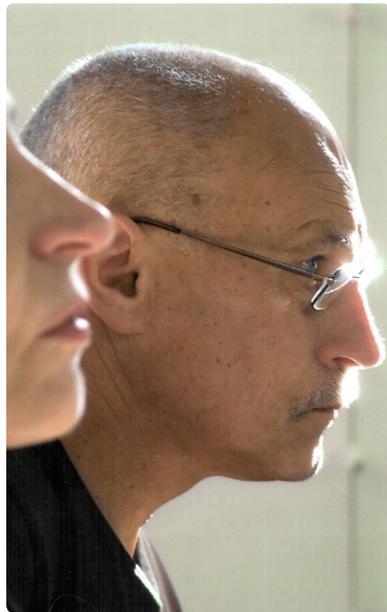
I tried to express the idea with minimal means by composing mise-en-scenes, using colours and creating emotions with them (tension, joy, anxiety, cosiness, and drama). The actors work in an empty space, without any of the usual scenography. Their bodies, video projections, and gestures-signs become a means of expression that create drama. It takes a great deal of virtuosity in an empty space to tell a story. It's an experiment for us creators, not a theatrical experiment. The performance itself is even very traditional, I expected a different result. I would do differently now. Maybe it's a sign for the future.

We worked together with Vytautas Stanionis in the performance (he is the author of video projections). We are an integral part of each other's creations. Even our lives have been rooted in creation. Everything is intertwined like in a Gordian knot - you cannot cut it. We no longer think whether it is bad or good. It just is. You are making borscht and they tell you: 'Come, you will be filmed.' And you go. Then you get to the screen of the short film festival, and no one smells your borscht... Julija - it shouldn't have been. I have always been opposed to the use of children in adult theatre. To me, it's like a taboo. I feel bad about it. But there was a great need for that image, that nymphet of Vladimir Nabokov...

My family is not a co-author of this play, and her life is a source of inspiration, but it has to do with personal experiences. When life builds on the edge of the roof, primo mihi melts in you - first of all for me.

Vytautas V. Stanionis.

A Moment of Authenticity



Vytautas V. Stanionis, a photographer, has been collaborating with the Alytus City Theater since 1990

In the spring of 2012, in search of a name for an ordinary creative laboratory of photographers, thoughts revolved around theatrical imitations in the city, theatrical states of the city, casual everyday and extraordinary city theatre... Finally, the name proposed by Loreta, 'Performance Continues, or Escape from the Theatre' was selected and stuck.

When the group gathered, members of the laboratory did not have to clarify in a long and tedious manner whether our life resembles a theatre. We understood everything ourselves. To make it more fun, the thoughts, the links to creativity were written: to find theatre in oneself, next to oneself, in another person, to observe, to capture, to appreciate, to admire, to joke, to think, to imagine, to transform, to simulate, to manipulate, to seek for non-random coincidences, to defeat an idea...

And the exhibition took place in the small lobby of Alytus City Theatre. And we saw how a former militiaman, Romas, was standing stationary on a small crossroad, a sad journalist, Jurgis, was sitting at the bus stop, a young man, who turned into a devil, was stepping nowhere, a girl was making a toy fish fly at the shabby walls, an old uprooted house was rising up, the strangers of an art strike were walking with masks in the streets, a good girl in a hat was sitting next to a ramshackle beggar, Inga's goody-goody child was cuddling a dear little rabbit at her face, people in talented Igné's photos were doubling, Saulius' characters were making jokes at the old railway, a tailor was working, hiding her eyes in a white mask...

The scene remains for the actors, whilst the performance continues in life.

The experience of a professional theatre photographer is different. Sometimes, before shooting the performance, it is being watched, but all the focus is on the scenography, the arrangement of the actors on the stage, the lighting, but the storyline they are performing remains unclear. Someone asks: 'Well, what do you think?' And it is impossible to say anything. But after the break, the actors come back on stage, everything is watched by the director in the hall, and the shooting begins. Then you can create compositions yourself, stop the action, movement... stage.

The theatre recedes but Loreta's face, Onutė's tear, Alma's smile, Rimantas' gaze, Tomas' step, Arvydas' voice, Aurelija's laughing do not disappear from memory. Jonas's crafts, Edvardas' stories of people he knows. Basement darkness and dressing room secrets are preserved.

And the photographs very easily remind everyone how Arkadina smiled beautifully with her head raised in the smoke of 'Seagull', Cain and Abel splashed in the waters of the lake, Duchess Barbora clung to the big table in despair, and strongly embraced her Author Tula...

The first theatres appeared in ancient Greece many years ago. How many of them were there, how many disappeared, and how many are still waiting for their turn to be discovered? No one will ever count how many talents and passions, fame and applause there were because the river of life continued past them. There have always been and will be floods and tides, waterfalls, whirlpools and calm flows.

Most cities have their centres. And there is a place in our Alytus, which we call the centre, where the city theatre has been living and spreading its energy for the third decade. This city would become hardly recognisable in a dream, if it did not have a theatre.



Photo from the exhibition "The play continues, or an escape from the theater"

Inesa Pilvelytė. Let's Rise

I have recently been given the task of writing a short article - memoirs about our theatre. Small memories of a small actress in a small theatre in a small town...

What an ambition! Without them, it is better not to go to the theatre. You will not rise without wings. But the feathers do not grow immediately. First, gentle fluff emerges. You look at such a one-day-old chick and smile - no matter it would go soaring from only one flick, no matter that there is hardly any benefit from it - neither a hen, nor a rooster - but still an easy-on-the-eye new living creature of God. Everyone takes care of it, looks after it and pets it. I remember my grandmother turning on a higher wattage heat lamp for those yellow fluffs at night instead of the sun. Or maybe instead of a laying Mother Hen?

1990–1991... For some time, such a lamp has been turned on for our theatre as well. And the laying hen – the Alytus Executive Committee – is squawking about the soon-to-be-emerging new spacious chicken coop in the very centre of the city with new halls, dressing rooms, new equipment, and new opportunities. Unfortunately, only St Nijolė's Church was growing so fast and later it was modestly renamed the city hall. No problem. The chicken is still small. It will manage...

The chicken grows, fluff falls and the first feathers get their forms. But they are not always the most beautiful - sometimes they are ruffled and sometimes they are just desperately stagnant sticks. Comb them as much as you want, and they still stick out the other way... Nasty chicken – duck. Scolded by its own surrounding and not very hospitable by strangers. Most eager to grow up. To become a swan. Nightingale. Seagull?



*Inesa Pilvelytė, Alytus City Theater
Troupe actress since 1993 up to now*



Žydrius Gorelčenkas and Inesa Pilvelytė



"Seagull"

... 'Maybe it's better to grow up as something simpler,' says the famous critic A., who has already visited Nemunaitis, a creative theatre camp several times. She loves our theatre. And Dzūkija forests even more. And most of all her granddaughters are raving in those forests... Coo-coo, coo-coo, coo-coo... How to make it easier? If we fledged, if the most beautiful songs sounded at the tops of trees...

In the newly created repertoire theatre, viewers want to see performances of high literary value, young directors - to prove themselves at attempting to recreate masterpieces of classics which they have been analysing in institutes until very recently. For the actors, it is the expectations of a stunning flight and highest level – August Strindberg's 'Freken Julija', Justinas Marcinkevičius' 'Mindaugas', Pierre Beaumarchais' 'The Marriage of Figaro', Juozas Grušas' 'Beatrice, Run', and Anton Chekhov's 'The Seagull'.

... We have been rehearsing 'The Seagull' until the morning for the second week. Director A.'s wife is director D. and is in America, so no one is putting in the strict frames of work, household and health care. We are working. Everyone is tired and nervous but also happy. Hot early June. The hall is full of creative passions lasting until tension of the premiere. The feet of the actors are cooled only by wading in the water in tins trays – the idea of the artist M... The performance is the day after tomorrow. The director is thinking about totally changing the scenes that were approved yesterday. Everything... We are trying. Director A. is sitting in the hall and laughing out loud. Alone. Because no one else finds it funny. We are repeating the final scene again. We are changing the circumstances again. That laughter again. My wings don't rise... I run from the stage, slam the door closed in the smoking room and weep... I feel relieved. I will rise now...

'I am a Seagull... I now know and understand, Kostia, that in our work, whether we are on stage or writing, the most important thing is not honour, nor brilliance, nor what I dreamed of, but patience. Learn to carry your cross and believe. I believe, and it doesn't hurt me that much, and when I think of a vocation, I'm not afraid of life... '*

I'm not afraid. I know there will be new seagulls, new Beatrices. We will face many things. Let's rise?

* A. Chekhov. 'Seagull'

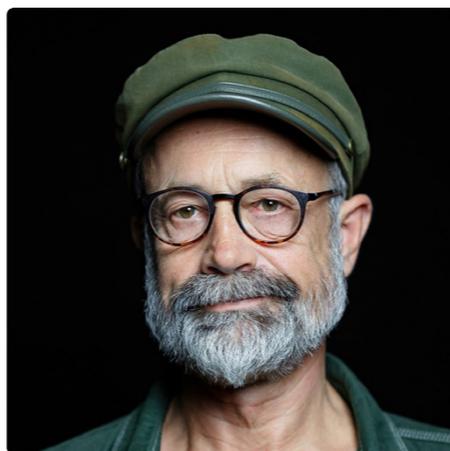
Arvydas Kinderis. Confrontation in the Native *Depths*

Saulė Pinkevičienė

When Dalia Kimantaitė and I graduated from Moscow, the course leader, a great teacher, passed away. Galina Alexeyevna Kalashnikova suggested to us to leave Moscow for a while after our studies. She said that we did not have any experience, but we would get it in a provincial theatre since student affairs are one thing, and learning about the theatre from its inside is another thing. 'So, go to a really *small village!*'

We did so but in our native country. National revival had already begun in Lithuania. Lina Linarčikienė, the then head of the Culture Department, talked to us and said that the theatre would come to Alytus and there are already laid foundations because Nijolė Januškevičienė, the then chairwoman of the Executive Committee, really *wanted* theatre. We also met the chairwoman who kept urging: 'Just come back, we are building a house for actors!' That house was designed by the Nemunas, in a very beautiful part of the resort town.

We may not appreciate it today, but I think that a monument to N. Januškevičienė should be erected just because she managed to start the construction of the theatre. (Unfortunately, it destroyed the old town of Alytus as well, but this is another story.) A spiritual institution appeared in the city that had not been there previously. Practically, we received a good bait. And although soon everything turned upside down, in 1989, Dalia and I had already returned to Alytus, where we found ten positions for the theatre troupe which we took. We met director Gintaras Nasutavičius, who was



Arvydas Kinderis, director of Alytus Theater studio in 1989–1996, artistic director of Alytus city theater in 1996–2015



„Barbora Radvilaitė“ (Inesa Pilvelytė)

already working and had a troupe. Dalia staged her diploma performance based on Samuel Beckett, 'Endšpilis' with him.

Construction of the house for actors on the bank of the Nemunas was never started, N. Januškevičienė remained in office for a short time, and no one seemed to be in a hurry to 'build at the machines'. We did several events in the city, got to know the local bohemian and spent time developing ourselves intellectually.

'Kinderis, can we do anything together?', was once suggested by the artist Loreta Skruibienė, in whose workshop we used to meet (in the building next to the then artists' cafe 'Pušis' on Vilniaus Street). We staged the first performance based on Oskaras Milašius', 'Emperor John the Heartless'. Loreta created dolls and Jonas Gaižauskas made them. The biggest problem was the artists. I talked to a former co-student at the Klaipėda Faculty of MTA, later TV journalist Rima Pilukaitė. And Dalia's classmate Vilius Balsis, a talented person who was an educated geophysicist. In 1990, they played the performance 'Emperor John the Heartless', which became the beginning of the history of Alytus Theatre. We showed our work at the puppet theatre festival in Kaunas. The theatre critic, Audronė Girdzijauskaitė, wrote an article for the newspaper, 'Atgimimas', where she praised us. I remember we were all going home by bus after the show, full of euphoria from good reviews and wine, having only been aptly criticised by Dalia. Dalia may have looked like a light-minded blonde at first glance, but she was always very tough, wilful and was always able to achieve the best possible creative results.



„Barbora Radvilaitė“
(Vidas Vaškius)



„Barbora Radvilaitė“ (Eugenijus Rakauskas)

In the summer of the same year, our fellow student Loreta Liausaitė graduated from Moscow we lived together in a dormitory in Khimki (Moscow district). We invited Loreta to come to Alytus, we said that there were prospects – positions and money for them. Loreta finally decided to stay in Alytus, having already started a family with Alytus photographer Vytautas Stanionis, and until then she always looked to her native Panevėžys, which was a much more theatrical city.

Gradually, our roads with L. Skruibienė parted: she founded the puppet theatre Aitvaras, while our goal was a drama theatre. We showed the first performance in the basement of an apartment building on Žiburio Street. Later, we became acquainted with Julija and Albertas Riabovai, the heads of Alytus Circus Studio. They invited us to rehearse at the Construction Trust where the Student Creative Centre was. The hall was not heated, the spectators were sitting with coats, but nonetheless, in general the space was good and a number of our performances were created and shown in it. In 1992, the first theatre studio gathered here.

Admittedly, we still didn't have the concept of theatre as such at the time. We just tried to make the most of the opportunities and made many premieres, discoveries, and experiments. Our co-student choreographer, Natalija Fiodorova, staged a dance performance, 'Dances in the Moon', in Alytus. Such a strange creative piece was born, it was one of the first choreographic performances in Lithuania. We showed its premiere in the restaurant 'Nemunas', later – in the theatre 'Vaidila' where it was seen by the father of contemporary dance, Audronis Imbrasas. He smiled kindly and asked: 'Will you continue? Not bad!'

From today's perspective, I would say: I should have left Alytus after the first ten years. Because the small hall started in 1996, and when we came to this new space, we put on a muzzle for ourselves. It was necessary to do repertoire performances, and the routine began. Instead of youth and visions, the perception that this is theatre came: you need an audience and reports for your activities. While the theatre studio belonged to the city's culture house (we rehearsed at the Riflemen's House), things were simpler, we could easily say how many boards or fabric would be necessary for the scenography. When we became a municipal theatre, political affairs began. I was elected to the first Alytus City Municipal Council. Some fellow politicians even said that I should be more active: 'The actors need to get the flats! Let them give you the hall in the centre!'

The relationship with the authorities became inevitable, as it is today and will be in the future, unless the theatre ever were to move under the control of the Ministry of Culture. Then there would be other gentlemen in Vilnius, but there would be no local mercantile interests either in the theatre or in the hall anymore. I am glad that for the first time in the last five years, theatre has, for the first time in its history, actually performed functions and handled not only theatrical processes, but also funds. If we had otherwise had such an opportunity earlier, completely different work would have been done.

I devoted 25 years of my life to Alytus Theatre, but I did not meet any city mayor who asked me: 'What do you need, how can we help?' The pressure to join the party began. In 1999, the Academy of Music and Theatre devised a course for Alytus Theatre (supervisor Dalia Kimantaitė), the emergence of which is related to my party affiliation as a theatre art director. And it paid off! Onutė Pakėnienė, the then head of the Theatre and Film Department of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, and academician Zigmąs Zinkevičius, the Minister of Education and Science, helped to design the course. The municipality did not give a cent. Without the generous blessing of the Seimas and the targeted funds to finance the course, there would have been nothing, I was lobbying and only later realised that I could get a few million more to finish the Great Hall, but I was probably still too naïve at the time. For me, the course was the most important thing because without professional actors it was difficult to achieve a result. 15 people were able to get funding for their studies. Apparently, there were few similar precedents in Lithuania, unless exceptional conditions were created for Juozas Miltinis' troupe in Panevėžys, but the actors needed diplomas there, and in our case – young people lacked education.

In 2013, a second course was planned for Alytus Theatre, but the heads of the academy changed, and we were offered the choice of the existing graduates. Such practice is common in Lithuanian theatres today. We no longer 'moved those waters'.

If we talk about the whales on which the Alytus Theatre has been standing since its opening, it was probably mainly due to our ambitions and enthusiasm. The theatre probably needed to be built conceptually somehow, while we did it downstream, according to the situation. Life wears out a person, and a good creator is pretentious – everything must be at



Alytus City Theater Course at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater: Eglė Juškaitė, Tomas Kunčinas, Liudvikas Vilimas, Robertas Šarknickas, Rasa Grigutytė, Ona Gudaitytė, Marius Sadauskas (there is no Inesa Pilvelytė and Erika Jasinskaitė in the photograph) with directors, course leader Dalia Kimantaitė and Arvydas Kinderis

the highest level for him. Actors, scenography, and directing. We have never reached that highest level so that we become famous throughout Lithuania. As in other provincial theatres, all phenomena took place in Vilnius at that time. Maybe only in 'Beatrice, Run' (director D. Kimantaitė) was it that received a great resonance.

The city and the theatre are the connecting vessels. A good example, although much later, is the theatre's festival, 'Com•media', (at the beginning - 'Long Live Comedy!'). This is a welcome festival that has its own aura. Like the theatre night, 'Com•moon•a', that is needed for the presentation of modern theatre. However, it seems to me that the theatre in Alytus works today, like yesterday, through education. Young people go to study acting and also choose other creative professions. Theatre school, theatre volunteering, conversations and practical experiments are all the opportunities for young people. We could also remember the times when the Culture Department was headed by Gitana Molevičienė, and the Alytus City Municipality allocated funds to schools so that they could watch the performances of Alytus Theatre. Even then, only the now-perceived truth about the cultural passport was used in our city. It was a great help to Alytus Theatre.

On the other hand, in other cities, such as Marijampolė, theatre was not born. During the first year after returning from Moscow, Dalia planned to stage a performance at Marijampolė Theatre. But when she went there, it turned out that almost everyone had already left. The Soviet era was over, and young people quickly realised that there was no time to wait for the director to come up with their visions. You want to eat today. The premiere did not happen.

Vidmantas Ežerskis: 'I wish you to become the Grand Theatre of Dzūkija or the State Theatre of Southern Lithuania'

Darius Babijonas

'Beatrice, Run' was the first performance he saw when he came to work as the director of Alytus City Theatre, Vidmantas Ežerskis recalled. According to him, the first unusual situation that had happened to him after the performance was when the actress did not come to say goodbye to the audience at the end of the performance.

'Then I was explained that Beatrice dies at the end of the performance, which is why the actress does not come to bow to the audience,' Vidmantas remembers the memorable directorial idea of Dalia Kimantaitė, who experienced more challenges and one of the first occurred just before taking the theatre director's chair.

Initially, V. Ežerskis had to refute the 'myth' that 'a choreographer cannot be a theatre director', and after winning the competition, he did not immediately become the director of the theatre.

'It was not approved by the board, I had to go a long way before the city council blessed it,' recalls V. Ežerskis, who, later, had almost two decades of theatre affairs with various city politicians and managers.

'I'll make a joke – the biggest problem of the theatre is that its building is too close to the city municipality, from which



Vidmantas Ežerskis. Director of the
Alytus City Theater (1997–2013)



'Witch' (Jonas Gaižauskas, Vidas Vaškis)

someone wanted to tell us what to do all the time and maybe even wished to use us for their revenge. However, we survived and grew up, and to those politicians who understood and supported, or even if they did not help but did not interfere either, I say 'Thank you', says Vidmantas as a stubborn Samogitian, who had never done it personally, but in order not to forget, through this book, he wants to show his gratitude to Dobilas Kurtinaitis, former mayor of the city, and Rasa Kazlauskienė, former deputy mayor, who perhaps understood the theatre most and contributed to the qualitative breakthrough of Alytus residents.

With the help of the aforementioned and various other city leaders, a theatre was built. Opening of the great hall became a real challenge. After one mayor visited and sat there, we even had to rearrange the rows of chairs. The construction took place both in the building and 'inside', and D. Kimantaitė and Arvydas Kinderis took more care of the latter, starting the course of actors at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, designed for Alytus actors. After the premieres in Vilnius, before his studies, the director heard that 'the performance is good, but... the actors are very Alytus-like', and no such criticism remained after the course. Another stone fell for Vidmantas when he agreed with the colleagues that the children's performances did not require a scenography with three cubic meters of wood and structures, which took three hours to put together, so it was necessary to go to the tour at four o'clock in the morning just to manage everything.

During his 18 years in the chair of the head of Dzūkija Capital Theatre, V. Ežerskis distinguishes not only the construction of the building and the creation of the professional troupe but also the ups and downs, among which are simple economic and mindset changes, professionalism and marketing, when, according to him, some performances which were 'for their own pleasure' or 'straight to the basement' began to be replaced by the performances that rai-



"Lithuanian Has Come" (Tomas Kunčinas)

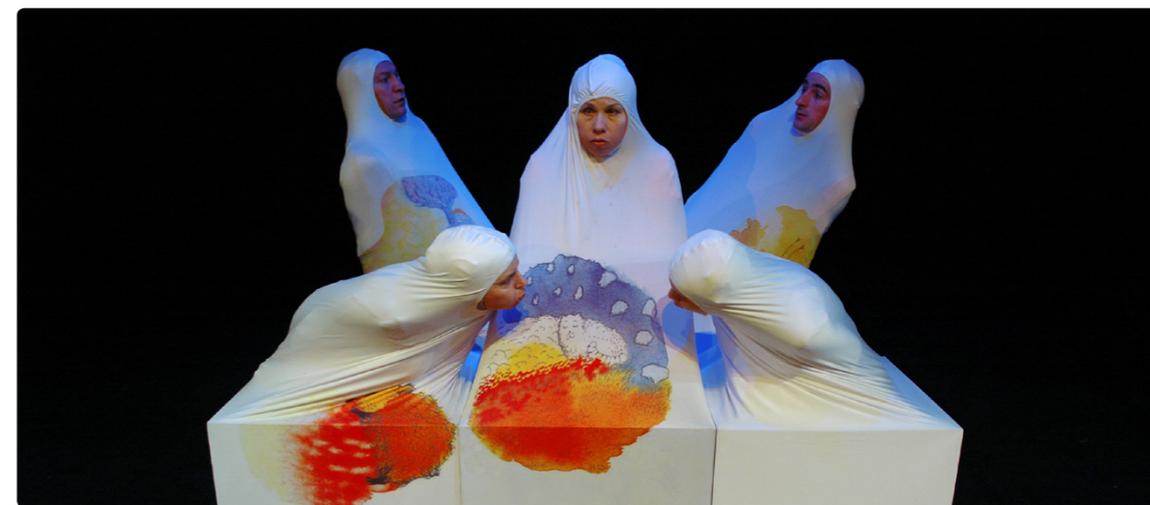
sed Alytus to a certain level, - 'Catcher in the Rye' (2001), 'In the Shadow of the Altars. Experimental Days' (2004), 'In the Shadow of the Altars. Life Goes', 'Heroin' (2005), 'Mauglis' (2007), the musical, 'Fish Shepherd' (2009) and a performance, 'Witch' in Dzūkija dialect (2012).

The roller coaster for the theatre did not end there, but the success became more widespread, especially in the goal of attracting and expanding the audience, and such solution to this goal was found in Alytus in 2012 with the creation of a theatre comedy festival.

Another achievement, according to Vidmantas, is that the theatre was filled with guest actors (Tadas Gryn, Tomas Kliukas, Eimutis Kvoščiauskas, Aušra Štukytė, etc.), and the troupe became diversified and not just the material of two or three of the same directors. The performances were staged by the choreographer Algis Mažeika, Jonas Gaižauskas (performance for children 'Cat's House', 2013) and Inesa Pilvelytė, whose performance 'For Children and Similar' - 'Ambrozijus, Purkiaus and... ', 2012, created according to Sigutė Ach – although was shown in one of the smallest theatre spaces, actually sold the most tickets.

Other audiences began to fill the theatre and the spaces which were previously unused were filled by Alytus Puppet Theatre, a jazz club, which was opened on the first evening by Kongas (Vytautas Grubliauskas, current mayor of Klaipėda City) with his band (Doudy Jazz Band). Performers from Birštonas and Kaunas International Jazz Festivals, amongst others gave concerts. Also, Studio 3 disco invited people to parties and concerts, then there were a couple of other galleries, a theatre cafe offering New Year's celebrations and other events, a local radio, and later a television, as well as a sound recording studio which started broadcasting.

V. Ežerskis hopes that Alytus Theatre, which has survived both changes and major crises, will not only survive, but, having learned both to boast their strengths and accept their criticisms, will become even bigger, maybe even the Dzūkija's great or the greatest of Southern Lithuania's state. The most important thing is to work and create in such a way that in the future no one will want to say again that Alytus Theatre has to be closed...



"Ambrozijus, Purkiaus and..." (Eugenijus Rakauskas, Ona Gudaitytė and Tomas Kunčinas)

Vytautas Skruibys. 30 years. We either spoil or save two generations

Darius Babijonas

„30 years. We either spoil or save two generations’, – Vytautas Skruibys assesses the period spent at Alytus City Theatre. His Highness is written in Vytautas’ email, but in addition to the work of the stage illuminator in all the performances staged in the city theatre, he took care of the music, also worked as a ticket maker, was the director of the productions, and even helped build the theatre. Regarding the recent years, Vytautas says that he wants to divide the history of Alytus Theatre into an immature period and mature period.

Vytautas would regard the mature period as the time since moving into the theatre building in the Town Hall Square and installing a small hall. Before it could be turned from the conference room of the houses, built by engineers, into the theatre, we had to work hard and, in some places, - to re-plan and reconstruct. With the big hall, which the city’s theatrical artists had been waiting for many years, so much so that they no longer cared about the details anymore and did not dare to or forgot to ask the builders to make an exit behind the scenes to go outside the stage.

Initially, Alytus theatrical artists made an impression on the country’s theatre critics, not through the stage, but through the roof. V. Skruibys says that he does not remember the first remarks of teatrologist, Audronė Girzijauskaitė about the performances of Alytus Theatre,



Vytautas Skruibys. A specialist working in Alytus Theatre. He has probably tried most professions (including acting) in Alytus City Theater and Studio since 1991

but does not forget the reviews about the campaigns, which she called exceptional and which often took place on the roof.

They had to perform as well.

‘I remember when we were rehearsing ‘Freken Julia’, I was speaking Samogitian, Jonas Gaižauskas was speaking like a Vilnius resident’, Vytautas remembers. He said some of the roles he had taken, perhaps because he was not afraid of height or any different episodic roles with ‘characteristics’, or maybe due to the fact that there were no ‘castes’ of actors and non-actors at the time, the role was rehearsed in ‘King Ube’. In ‘Mindaugas’ they used to appear at the beginning of the performance. His Daumantas then rushed to the hardware room, but at the end he had to return to the stage role - in order to finally ‘defeat’ Mindaugas (Robertas Šarknickas).

According to V. Skruibis, Mindaugas, staged in 1998, was probably the most serious production of Alytus theatrical artists shown to Lithuania at that time. It caught the attention of Justinas Marcinkevičius, utilised consultations of the historian prof. Edvardas Gudavičius, and in addition the scenography was made of one and a half tons of iron.

First staging? In 1990, the puppet performance, ‘Emperor John the Heartless’ by Oscar Milašius was staged first in the repertoire of Alytus Theatre. It was created and directed by Arvydas Kinderis, together with the artist, Loreta Stirbytė. He returned to Alytus in 1989 to work with Dalia Kimantaitė, who also studied theatre whilst she was in Russia. They were joined by Loreta Liausaitė, a graduate of the Moscow State Cultural Institute a year later, and Irena Alperytė, who had previously obtained a cultural worker degree, coupled with the qualification of a drama team leader in the above-mentioned educational institution. The latter, who staged the first performance of an actors’ theatre, instead of a puppet show, in the repertoire of the Alytus studio (‘The Taste of Honey’) in 1992, later pursued academic activities and went on to become an associate professor at various Lithuanian cultural and art institutions.

Vytautas remembers the origins of Alytus City Theatre in the Club Draugystė, which was located in the basement of an apartment house in the Dainava residential area. Vilius Balsys, D. Kimantaitė’s classmate, and Rima Pilukaitė, who later became a journalist for LRT and other media sources, played the main roles in the first performance, ‘Emperor John the Heartless’, that was created here. Gediminas Kačergis and J. Gaižauskas, who returned from the Netherlands where he had been working as a mime artist, also played in the then bohemian ‘Draugystė’ which later became... a branded Alytus beer shop.



“Freken Julia” (Aurelija Vaivadaitė and Jonas Gaižauskas)



Vytautas Skruibys (right) in the performance "Mindaugas"



„King Ubu“. Campaign in Rotušės square

The first performances were shown at the Student Creative Centre, where they could give thanks to Dzūkija circus leaders, Albertas Riabovas and Julija Riabova, and then also at the Rifleman's House which A. Kinderis already knew before returning to Alytus, showing his diploma performance Medea. This stage also needed to be redesigned by theatrical artists, as it was unusual since it had a slope.

'Work is a pleasure, everything else is a matter of karma, something either has or has not performed any given function, good or bad,' Vytautas philosophizes. His colleagues considered it important to receive a compliment rather than criticism from him.

If I simply say 'Okay', they start thinking something is wrong...', His Highness remarks.

He appreciates the actors, and during all the activities of the studio and theatre he sees special changes after 1999 when Alytus became a class of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. According to V. Skruibis, after the studies the actors improved considerably, learned to articulate better, to analyse dramaturgy. Eugenijus Rakauskas did not finish his studies together with the course, but it is great that he managed to improve himself.

30 years of the theatre is not a long time. Especially since there is always room for improvement. V. Skruibys notices that now the premiere fills one big or two big halls, this indicator could change in a non-decreasing sense.

'Let's not play too much', says an old Alytus stage artist about the current tendencies of some performances in the theatre as he thinks that everyone needs to learn, especially about how to live with the big theatre stage.

Jonas Gaižauskas. The Troupe's Theatre Being Tested by Time

Saulė Pinkevičienė

There was a movement in the beginning. I came to the studio of Alytus Theatre from the pantomime and brought the greatest need for theatre, which I always felt in myself. Where does this need come from? ... I don't know.

Whilst still a student, I attended a pantomime in Vilnius, at that time the members of the Modris Tenisonas troupe spread throughout Lithuania, and while studying at Vilnius Institute of Civil Engineering (VISI) I gathered my troupe. After my studies, I came to work in Alytus. In 1983, I started collecting pantomime groups at the then Alytus Textile Palace of Culture. We showed the etudes in Cotton discos, led by Liudas Ramanauskas. An extremely active cultural centre appeared on the outskirts of the city. It was a very fun time!

In 1986, director Gintaras Nasutavičius came to Alytus and staged his diploma performance at the Cotton Palace of Culture. He soon founded the first traveling Wagon Theatre, where he invited my pantomime troupe. That's how it all began because all the actors, starting with Saulius Bartkus, soon went to G. Nasutavičius' Theatre, 'Provincija'. At the same time, positions for the theatre troupe appeared in Alytus; it was already decided to build a city theatre.

And here Arvydas Kinderis, who graduated from directing studies in Moscow, returned to Alytus. I remember how we went to Vilnius to watch his diploma work - the play, 'Medėja', with starring actress, Rasuolė Laurinaitytė, from Alytus. I saw that the work was serious. The performance was filmed and



*Jonas Gaižauskas, Actor of Alytus
City Theater since 1990 up to now*

taken to Moscow to show to the commission. At that time, I didn't understand anything yet – if there would be a theatre in Alytus or will not, but Arvydas and I were friends and it was interesting what he was doing.

The real curiosity began when Loreta Skruibienė and Arvydas Kinderis took up 'Emperor John the Heartless'. I was given the task of making puppets. I crafted wooden dolls and various other beautiful items. I accumulated knowledge over many years and it was very useful, because while studying in the library I picked up two stacks of books: one - compulsory subjects, engineering, economics, and the other - about the theatre. This is how I discovered puppets and in Alytus, I got a unique opportunity to touch them with my hands. We started putting, gluing, bending the wires, but reviving the dolls was not an easy task. It takes a lot of hours if you have no school, no YouTube channel, no internet. It would be easier now; I would have been thrilled!

This was my personal introduction to the Alytus Theatre studio. My means of expression was movement, it seemed that dramatic roles were not for me – I could not. But little by little, I started acting in the background, and then I got the main role of Servant Jean in the performance, 'Freken Julia'. The first and powerful role in the play by August Strindberg! We rehearsed for half a year. After playing this role, I realised I could do something.

The life of the theatre studio was very intense at that time, and all of us were friends. We felt a great sense of community because we were united by the theatre. In critical situations, if there was a worse relationship or we faced any difficulties, it was enough to ask: 'Are we still going to do the theatre or are we not anymore?' Because it didn't matter what kind of performance was shown that today, the theatre was important.

And the theatre is something... WOW...

We took our work very seriously. I was late for rehearsal only once. I came carrying a cake with nuts and raisins, which I baked myself, already knowing that my twin daughters had been born. And we rehearsed again. In general, we rehearsed and analysed a lot. I once read that Borisas Dauguvietis had made the performance in two months and thought, what is the nonsense? Now we 'bake' performances like that as well.

What is professional theatre and what is not? This question was with us constantly; we gave it to ourselves. The answer was simple: if we get rewarded, we are probably professionals. This gave me a special and personal inner feeling that I was insurmountably lucky that I do my



*"Emperor John the Heartless"
(Rima Pilukaitė)*



"Hunchback Musician" (Ona Gudaitytė, Erika Jasinskaitė, Eglė Juškaitė, Vidas Vaškius, Eugenijus Rakauskas, Vaidas Praspaliauskas, Vincas Vaičiulis, Tomas Pukys and Eglė Kordiukovaitė)



"Hunchback Musician" (director Jonas Gaižauskas)

favourite job and I even get paid for it! Yes, not much, but anyway. I was so happy that you wouldn't find a happier person in the world.

Maybe 30 years ago we didn't know what theatre was, but today, watching the flow of time, I already know it. The most important thing for the troupe theatre is the test of time. This is not a gathering of young people. You must live 10 or 20 years, become old and rebuild upon the same foundation. The theatre of Valentinas Kirlis or Aldona Balalienė could also have survived if it had maintained its foundation. Either the state has to support the theatre, or internal things and resources need to be relied upon, for example, the troupe works even though it does not receive a reward. That would be such a beautiful sacrifice. For the theatre.

In Alytus, the theatre survived because the city authorities supported it and the society itself did not allow it to close; as soon as the threat was felt ('separating the troupe from the building'), everyone immediately revolted. It is easy to stop when we have such examples of Lithuanian theatres that have been stopped – and that's it.

And we had to withstand 30 years! When art director Arvydas Kinderis and director Dalia Kimantaitė left the theatre in 2015, I was really startled. I wondered if this would be the end and our theatre was going to be destroyed? But when Inesa Pilvelytė came to the fore, knowing well what was needed for the performances to appear, that anxiety soon disappeared. Inesa handled the situation very well and pushed the theatre forward a lot in a creative and managerial senses.

In addition to acting in the theatre, I have always had other responsibilities. For many years I was responsible for the assembly of decorations. I took care that the constructions would be

functionally sound and would not collapse. And I drew, designed, and made them myself. Currently, I am in charge of the props. It seems that the theatre really needs 'universal' people and the more technical subtleties the theatre possesses, such as the lighting, accompaniment, production of decorations, the actor knows, the greater the benefit. Who knows, maybe he'll even have to be a director? I don't know if there is such a theatre in the world where the actors don't have to worry about anything anymore, but we pay and do everything on the stage and when the curtain goes down...

It could probably be said that Alytus Theatre brought theatre to the city, and that is very important. The theatre is intertwined with life, it is talked about, everything is pulsating. Just going! I am not saying that all 50,000 Alytus residents are invested, but that part that care about it is changing and growing. They go to study and come back. A lot of young people grew up who are related to the theatre in one way or another. One of the youngest actors of the current theatre troupe, Povilas Adomaitis, played the musical, 'The Fish Shepherd', at Alytus Theatre ten years ago, and has now completed his acting studies. He was supposed to play a major role in my performance, 'Hunchback Musician', but got a trauma during the rehearsal. Sometimes actors demand more from themselves than the director from them.

I also tend to be very critical of myself. Our troupe had been in doubt for 30 years, and it seemed important to check again whether we were on the right track. Now I realise we did everything right, but it just took time to establish ourselves. At Alytus Theatre, I matured as an actor, director, and drama teacher. Without him, there would be no theatre studio 'Drevinukas' or Jotvingiai gymnasium theatre studio 'Taškas'. As Alytus City Theatre has never been on its own, it has created unique phenomena around it that just need to be seen.



"Hunchback Musician" (Tomas Pukys)

Eugenijus Rakauskas.

Until *idée fixe* lives

Saulė Pinkevičienė

It is said that a man lives as many lives as he speaks foreign languages. Perhaps something similar is with roles to an actor. I have acted in 92 performances, and in total, 111 of them have been created in Alytus Theatre in 30 years (including promotions). Not all roles are equally dear to the actor and the audience also has its favourite performances. We have probably shown 'Barbora Radvilaitė', directed by Arvydas Kinderis for the longest time - ten years! Loreta Liausaitė's 'The Canterville Ghost' ended its life on stage with the 76th performance. I don't know if it would be possible to show a performance quite so many times now. Maybe Andra Kavaliauskaitė's mono-performances? There's a performance we've shown just three times, and there are premieres which do not even make it to be shown at all.

I am often asked how I found the theatre. The truth is that I was looking for it; after returning from the army, I failed to gain a place at the Academy of Music and Theatre. Having heard that the theatre studio in Alytus was looking for actors, I went for an audition... I probably performed well, given the fact I am still in the troupe today.

The beginning was interesting, I couldn't imagine what would come of it. When I came to the studio in 1991, I found three directors and just a few actors: Gintarą Gvazdaitį, Žydrių Gorelčenko, Rimą Pilukaitę. He said we would rehearse in the daytime (it would be no longer folk theatre), so my first question was: 'Will you pay any salary?', I have never been starving. I soon gave up my other jobs.

Most of the studio's life was 'boiling' in the basement on Žiburio street, in the municipal premises where we were allowed to set up a workshop. We made the decorations ourselves, painted them with acetone paint, ensuring we were armed with respirators and gas masks. Often before the premiere, after a sleepless night, we used to transport the decorations through the stadium of the Secondary School No. 1 to the Construction Trust. With wings and replicas, we used to travel the distance like a wandering theatre.



Eugenijus Rakauskas, Alytus Theatre Studies, actor of Alytus City Theatre Troupe from 1991 up to now

We were kept focused by our enthusiasm; everything was interesting because it was new. Sometimes it seems to me that that the enthusiastic phase is not over yet - as long as the *idée fixe* is alive, you go on stage having forgotten all your worries. Sometimes we remember the study times with colleagues and laugh. Maybe sometimes we will cry out of nostalgia for the past. In the theatre, I was both crying and thinking of leaving it. There are many doubts because the scene is not as simple as a job delivered to you on a conveyor belt, you have to look and discover. The theatre itself is a quest.

Maybe that's why I am always bothered by the question: What is the face of Alytus Theatre? (I have read the idea that Juozas Milutinis was a brilliant director because he created the performances for himself and not for the audience, and it was hard to please him.) The theatre was looking for it all the time, sometimes - even drastically. It has always been choosing classics, rather than meaningless plays. The first performance, 'Emperor John the Heartless' sounded innovative at Kaunas Festival. We played Shelagh Delaney's 'Taste of Honey' in the middle of the hall, the actors had to enter that improvised scene in the dark; we also were sitting on the audience's knees and stepping on their feet. We showed the movement performance, 'Dances in the Moonlight' (director Natalija Fiodorova), in the restaurant 'Nemunas'. The city authorities did not know how to react, so they invited specialists from Vilnius that were required to evaluate whether it could be shown. The rock opera, 'Fisher', is worth remembering as an experiment in the genre.

The change in the troupe during the studio was huge: young people who had just graduated from school and tried to find themselves came. Higher schoolteachers came to give the lectures. A nucleus had formed, around which new faces seemed to revolve as if atoms. We also became more visible as part of the cultural life of Alytus and organised public promos. 'Let us go to the theatre!' - we called for the completion of the construction with our performances, we moved the stone because beneath a stone no water flows. The small hall was our first professional theatrical space, although originally designed as a conference hall.

Theatre is probably not just bad or good, as in life, the line is rippling. (As now, it was only three days before the premiere of 'Macbeth', and, with the lockout everything seemed to have gone down into the abyss!) Maybe no one tried to close the theatre outright, but I have heard various ideas. So far, no strike has taken place. However, it should be noted that sometimes we 'cooked in our own juices' and could leave at any time, but the desire to have and be in the theatre withheld me.

Now Alytus Theatre lives very well. The performances are staged by many invited directors and each of them has a unique vision. We also strive to improve as actors. We participate in festivals, satisfy our egos, and look at how others work. It feels good to be a prophet in your own country too!

Especially as the premiere approaches, I often dream that I have to go on stage, and tonight I dreamed of the theatre again. But it cannot be otherwise as it is my life.



"Dancing in „The Moonlight“ (with Rasa Žvinakyte)

Aurelija Vaivadaitė. Theatre Lessons

Saulė Pinkevičienė

My friend became interested in the announcement of the Alytus Theatre studio in the window of the Construction Trust Hall but it so happened that they admitted me. I had no idea what theatre was and with whom it was 'eaten', but so far, I thank fate for this seemingly random adventure, and the theatre for giving me the foundation for the rest of my life.

...We were told that during the selection to the studio will need to show etude. Of course, they also explained what it was. I had recently buried a puppy, so I decide to create this scene. It turned out to be very... funny for directors Arvydas Kinderis, Dalia Kimantaitė and Loreta Liausaitė. They then explained their reaction to me: 'You're crying on stage but laughing from the situation on the inside!' It seemed very strange to me how they could so clearly understand what was going on inside me? However, now that I have spent more than ten years in the theatre, I too can see what is going on inside a person – this just goes to show that practice makes perfect!

Ten actors were admitted to the first studio of Alytus Theatre. During daytime we rehearsed, did sports in the gym, the classes were given by a psychologist, and in the evenings, we went to the studio at 'brazilka' to sew costumes. We were leading an extraordinary life full of discussions and life lessons also took place here. In the evenings, we, the newcomers, were watching the rehearsals. I remember we had to prepare the props – re-wrap the chocolates in glossy paper and put them back in the box. Oh gods, how badly we wanted those chocolates! The shelves in the shops were often half-empty, we waited for this task so that we could sneak at least one candy...

The heads of the studio, directors Arvydas and Dalia raised the troupe as if they were their own children and educated them. We



*Aurelija Vaivadaitė, actress of
Alytus City Theatre troupe in
1994–2000*



"Freken Julia" (with Jonas Gaižauskas)



"Seagull" (Eugenijus Rakauskas, Ona Gudaitytė, Artūras Zakalskis, Loreta Liausaitė and Artūras Kundrotas)



"Seagull" (with Artūras Zakalskis, Loreta Liausaitė, Eugenijus Rakauskas, Artūras Kundrotas and Robertas Šarknickas)

had not tasted theatre science, but we wanted the knowledge. We were taken to the theatres in Vilnius, Kaunas, and we even managed to visit some museums in Moscow. Many professional and human horizons opened up the informal studies in the theatre studio, I realised much later, after leaving the theatre.

...We moved to the Riflemen's House in 1993, it was amazing because the hall belonged only to us. Of course, it was bad that the 'Lyra' café worked in the same building - it was difficult to go straight home after work when such a café was under your nose! Inesa Pilvelytė joined the group while rehearsing at the Riflemen's House. Half of the members of the studio had already dropped out by that time, and I was the only one left from the ten, just a few years later.

We started rehearsing 'Freken Julia' (director Arvydas Kinderis). The first such big staging, and I managed to bag the lead role (it was shared with Inesa), it 'drained' me like a washing machine. The feeling of an unforgettable and boundless factor when your attitudes and personal freedoms are violated. The creative process was not easy for everyone, but the most difficult was the day of the premiere. How was I meant to handle stress and tension? Now, with experience and hindsight, I would play Julia in a completely different way, but here, I think, was a classic - everyone says so. It was cruel to hear criticism from the lips of Saulius Bartkus, but now I would laugh at it, but it takes time to understand put things into perspective.

... We went to the School of Fine Arts to earn salaries and we worked there as a theatre accountant. Until we headed from the school to the Riflemen's House, half the money used to disappear because we had to pay back our many debts. We struggled with of money all the time, but this was nothing new to us. In the theatre studio at that time we lived as one family,

we returned home only to sleep (in the true sense of the word). Relatives were probably not very interested in us because we were replying in excerpts from roles, and what normal person would understand that?

We still had a long and difficult road ahead to the theatre, our sanctuary. And now this place is sacred to me, but for the directors, Arvydas Kinderis, Dalia Kimantaitė and Loreta Liausaitė, I think it was more of a 'bloody' road. My greatest respect and thanks to Dalia, because thanks to her I stayed in the theatre and she put her trust in me. (Thank God, she did not have to be sorry for it, as we later found out. And to this day we meet somewhere in this wide world.) We entered our theatre directly from the very swstairs on which we held various promotions while the building was under construction. Professional lessons are alive and the experience is unreal. Nobody asked if I was afraid of heights, cold, or if I could learn to present a text from another angle - everything was learned here and now. And you had to deal with your fears yourself.

...Once on tour we showed a performance for children with masks. I was a puppy and my colleague was a cat. She hits me on my head with a hammer and she does it strongly by accident. Blood spills from my nose, I run behind the scenes, and Loreta puts cotton wool in my nose. I am shocked, cry, then Loreta slaps my face and pushes me back onto the stage. Until the performance is over, there is no time in the theatre for either pity for oneself or emotions. For me, theatre lessons are still useful in life.

... And when construction was finally over, we finally moved to our mecca. The creative process is happening here today as well, the theatre is alive, and I am very happy about that. More than ten years of my life has passed in it. The directors were my second parents who made an unforgettable contribution to the culture of Alytus. As Loreta says, theatre is a metaphor for life. Sure, it's Anton Chekhov's quote but on Loreta's lips it sounded to me for the rest of my life.

Ona Gudaitytė. Theatre in Kunčinas’ Town

Saulė Pinkevičienė

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to be on stage. After graduating, I was choosing between Alytus and Klaipėda. On the one hand, I wanted to be closer to my parents, home, but I also really wanted to be part of the theatre, but I also didn't know which theatre to choose. Alytus Theatre caught my attention since it was young and thus charming. I was the fourth graduate in the troupe, but that's not important – although you have ten diplomas and great talent, you only really grow when you start working.

24 years ago, I entered such a stage in the life of Alytus Theatre, when repertoire performances were already shown in the small hall. Being young and enthusiastic, we created theatre in a way in which we understood and managed it. It was not easy - Sometimes I had to work until dawn. During this time period, very impressive and interesting works were created. They were created by Dalia Kimantaitė, Arvydas Kinderis and Loreta Liausaitė - all three are very different personalities and directors.

Arvydas is manly and sedate, he staged a lot of classics and chose concentrated material. An unforgettable thing is Anton Chekhov's, 'The Seagull'. There are no small roles. There are as many layers and depths, as you are able to find, as if you are uncovering a fresco. This performance was some kind of stage, and I still keep it within my heart.

It is much like Dalia's 'Beatrice, Run'. So many years of showing! Full halls, roof-breaking audiences. After all, the theatre in Alytus is just beginning, and the young spectator often has



Onutė Gudaitytė, actress of Alytus City Theatre Troupe since 1996 up to now



"Cain and Abel. Daily Death" (with Jonas Gaižauskas, Tomas Kunčinas)

no idea how to react. 'Beatrice, Run' is like the adolescence of our theatre, our early youth. Dalia had intuition for well-earning performances and was designing pieces for young people and teenagers. It was her cup of tea.

Loreta's colour is different, and the material is different; her works are spiritual, sensitive, deep. Loreta was the most sensitive, very delicate and highly emotionally intelligent. We miss her in the theatre. Every Loreta's performance contained a deeper message. You will never be the same after leaving her performances. We have not shown 'Cain and Abel' for many years, and for me it still does not end... It was not one more work, but rather a certain wonder. I've never counted vacation days in my life, so we could rehearse again soon, and then waited until we got back on stage again. We worked very sensitively. We were open and felt each other even without words. It's a pity, it was too short. The performance could live, it had to be shown, taken to festivals...

From a distance point of view, the theatre lacked openness and was reluctant to invite guest directors from the country.

From a distance point of view, the theatre lacked open-mindedness.

There was nothing to be afraid of! Young and growing, interesting to ourselves and others with immediacy, enthusiasm and courage, we have reached a certain limit where we want to climb higher. The lake became a puddle, then we started to swamp. After all, the creator



"I Loved, I Love, I Was Loved" (with Marius Sadauskas, Tomas Kunčinas)

is not inexhaustible, he needs a break to renew his sources and find the strength to make a breakthrough.

No doubt, there have been cracks in the past as well, but in 2013 the head of the theatre changed, and an uncontrollable collapse began. The theatre needed change, but certainly not by such means. The wrong person came. He was unaware of the theatre and amputated it without mercy. No one will deny that Arvydas Kinderis, Dalia Kimantaitė and Loreta Liausaitė were the whales on which the theatre stood, and together we went the way without which there would be no theatre as it is today. We had to survive, so we reunited and became very strong once again. In every sense, it was the most difficult time in the history of Alytus Theatre.

We came as naïve idealists to the theatre and had to prove every day that theatre was necessary. Why? I don't know. There are other ways to express oneself. Today, I think it is probably because of the desire to share. I want to create something beautiful and meaningful so that this town (because for me it will remain *Kunčinas' town*) has a professional theatre, which is not only known, but also appreciated in both Lithuania, and also throughout the world. If we bring awards from foreign festivals, then we are something in that sense!

But the pink glasses are long gone, you want to go out on stage with a certain value to make the viewer realise it. Without the viewer, we are nothing. It happens that the wings go down and, look, complete strangers on the street start speaking so that I even was startled – I was not worth such beautiful words! We felt a particularly strong support at that most difficult time for the theatre and the troupe. I say, if there were any ideas in the tower to turn the theatre into a culture house, it would be a complete fiasco, something would destroy the karma for oneself!

Theatre is a way of life; the scene doesn't let you go day and night. When I suddenly appeared in the surgery, the surgeon kept urging: 'Relax!' And how can I relax if Herkus Kunčius' 'Arena of Freedom' premieres in a week and a half? Colleagues took a great care of me because the performance was dynamic, but one can't play it only partly - it just won't work. You go to the stage like you go to Mass because you have chosen such a spiritual practice yourself, you are praying, or how to say... You work with people's emotions and have to leave something good behind.

Sometimes we just want to miss the theatre, because our time is so fast and we do a lot, vividly, in every way. We run from premiere to premiere. And I want life a little slower. When you grow a theatre from a seedling, it has its value. It's very easy, if the medium is already created, and it can make a star out of you. Creating yourself is more important and nicer. All of us, actors, directors and spectators are the creators of Alytus Theatre, we cannot do it without each other because we are directly interconnected. Sometimes we just have to allow ourselves to look more broadly, the little things fall off like sand and you understand what it's all about.

Aldona Balalienė:

‘I have no idea how to lead actors who get paid’

Darius Babijonas

‘There is and there must be a drama theatre in Alytus’, says Aldona Balalienė from Alytus, who has worked as a director for more than 30 years, alongside Tomas Kunčinas, Inesa Pilvelytė and Vidas Vaškis. Together, they took the first steps on the theatrical stage, and Alma Purvinytė worked with the young people, summing up the team of the current Alytus city theatre. Dalia Kimantaitė worked at the District House of Culture, which was owned by the Folk Theatre, before directing studies; even earlier, in 1986, the diploma performance was staged by the director, Gintaras Nasutavičius, who came to Alytus.

The theatre, founded by Valentinas Kirlis with like-minded people in 1946 and started by Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė’s financial support, was entrusted to A. Balalienė in 1978. Before then, in 1959, it earned the title of folk theatre and won the title of the best theatre in the country in 1963, but its fundamental idea never wavered – the people of Alytus performed here without being paid.

‘I have no idea how to lead actors who get paid. After all, I would not explain to them that, for example, they are not suitable for the role. I would simply get mad...’, this statement is one of the answers as to why she did not display more similarities with those who created the current theatre of Dzūkija capital, which has managed to achieve the status of a professional theatre in recent years.



Aldona Balalienė

‘Maybe because I couldn’t, I didn’t want, and didn’t know how’, Aldona said, observing Arvydas Kinderis with D. Kimantaitė, G. Nasutavičius or Loreta Skruibienė’s attempts to create their own theatre in Alytus from the outside, and as of yet, there is no definitive answer as to whether all the afore-mentioned directors could agree and work harmoniously in one theatre together.

According to A. Balalienė, one thing she knows today is that L. Skruibienė’s Puppet Theatre has already earned its home by all the authorial and directing initiatives that have been tested in Alytus over time.

‘As well as Alytus Circus, it must have its place. There must be a place in the city, somewhere in the centre, where the townspeople and guests could come to watch the circus repertoire,’ says the long-term director.

G. Nasutavičius, who was introduced to her as the graduating director by Adolfas Juzumas, the former head of the district’s Culture Department, is remembered because of his diploma works, including, ‘Twilight Tales’, performances from the basement on Jemeljanovas Street, and later from the films and wagon theatre, but perhaps she was most surprised by A. Kinderis. When congratulating him on his wedding day to D. Kimantaitė and wishing the couple to return to the capital of Dzūkija, Arvydas replied: ‘Alytus? No way!’ This ‘never’ soon became a quarter of a century at Alytus City Theatre, where he worked as both an artistic director and director, whose merits, just like Dalia’s, have been awarded with several city culture premiums over the years...

For the last five years, I. Pilvelytė, actress of A. Balalienė’s Theatre, has been directing Alytus City Theatre.

‘Knowing her talent and creativity in fostering roles, I think Inesa might achieve more by realising herself as an actress. Of course, she is organised and knows how to direct and apparently, lead. Maybe that’s what the new generation of directors are like,’ says Aldona, who has only chosen director’s job throughout her theatrical life.

‘I didn’t enter the actors’ course because of my special voice nor because Irena Vaišytė, who had selected the course, did not like me, nor because I did not want to study with future TV directors, or for any other reason other than maybe it was because I decided early on what I was going to do’, remembers the mother of a daughter engineer and twin sons who graduated in acting.

A. Balalienė, who has lived by theatre in lively Klaipėda for many years, put herself out there after graduating from the School of Culture in Vilnius by joining the Institute of Theatre, Music and Film in Leningrad, where she was one place away from being in the top eight. In the same year, 1972, she enrolled the director’s studies in the Nadezhda Krupskaya Cultural Institute in Leningrad, the same place as the director Algirdas Radvilavičius, who later worked in Alytus. Aldona did not see the White Nights in Leningrad during her studies which were part-time because, she was already receiving 90 roubles for her work in the ho-



"The Marriage of Figaro" (Inesa Pilvelytė, Robertas Šarknickas)



"Coco Secret" (Inesa Pilvelytė)

use of culture where Jaroslavas Nekrašas soon became the director of the folk theatre. After Aldona's diploma work, 'Above the Blooming Willow Branch' (according to Marcelijus Martinaitis' poetry with Albert Antanavičius-Shakespeare) at the Folk Theatre, J. Nekrašas staged Tadas Blindas here with Domas Dabriška.

The director managed to get to know not only Domas, Jaroslavas, Valentinas, but also the actor of Kaunas Drama Theatre Leonardas Zelčius. who staged performances with them in Alytus.

The fate also let A. Balalienė meet Vytautas Maknis, a graduate of Alytus Gymnasium in 1927 and of Vytautas Magnus University in 1931 - a student of Balis Sruoga, and one of the historians of Lithuanian theatre development.

'Baby, why are you making the premium of my name, I am still alive and not a foreigner,' Vytautas admired Aldona with his modesty and irony.

V. Maknis' premium was awarded in his native Balkūnai village for the best production of Dzūkija's performance while he was still alive. It has survived to this day, but has already been 'devalued'. According to A. Balalienė, the personalities and legends of Alytus Region Theatre have unfortunately been not evaluated yet. The recording of 'Strange Miss Sevidge' performance, shown on Lithuanian television in 1987, has not remained but the older archives of the folk theatre, including posters created by artist, Julius Tuminauskas, have been handed out and could potentially turn into interesting exhibitions in the museum or memorials in similar institutions. A whole new museum might even appear because the Alytus Folk Theatre alone has invited its spectators to more than 100 premieres, and the Alytus City Theatre itself has already created many more performances.

Liudas Ramanauskas: '...to make the theatre a space to experiment with the possibility of error..'

Darius Babijonas

Liudas, a member of the jury of many festivals organised by Alytus Theatre, does not hide the fact that he was not immediately interested in the productions of the city theatre. There was even a period when he politely declined invitations to the premieres on the pretext of being very busy or involved in other circumstances. However, when the performances, 'about us', started to appear, it became an exact arrow for Melpomene to the hearts of Alytus residents who were sensitive to local themes and apparently missing them. Probably the first hit for L. Ramanauskas was the performance, 'Tūla, or We Are an Occupied Country,' directed by Loreta Liausaitė, which attracted, with the return of music of Eugenijus Kanevičius and Jurgis Kunčinas', life back to the stage.

Until then, directing in the city theatre did not involve him – either due to the excessive desire of the creators to look after the repertoire, the guessed theatre, or for other reasons, maybe even personal ones. One of these could have been the previous admiration for the 'basement' theatre of director Gintaras Nasutavičius, who worked in Alytus, on Vasilijus Jemeljanovo Street, followed by the Wagon Theatre 'Provincija'. Perhaps that is why the first attempts of Dalia Kimantaitė and Arvydas Kinderis, who came to Alytus after studying in Russia and started to create a city theatre, did not seem immediately attractive, especially when we compare it to the premiere of 'Emigrants', staged by 'Provincija', which inspired the city, G. Nasutavičius' performance-diploma performance 'Twilight Tales' according to Gražina Marija Mareckaitė, etc.

However, time has shown that Arvydas and Dalia wanted more and could create a theatre in Alytus. According to Liudas, they were motivated by a desire to find a compromise, which apparently allowed their theatre studio to turn into a theatre became a city theatre, with premises and, over time, with a professional status.



Liudas Ramanauskas

Was there anything in the city before the theatrical tries of Kinderiai and Nasutavičius? Yes, says the talker, who, via his home environment,, got to know the theatre not only from the stage, but also through the bohemian side- the so-called behind the scenes. Strange or not, but the bohemian part seems to be becoming less and less significant, not only in Alytus or Šiauliai, but also in other Lithuanian theatres...

Prior to the above directors of his generation in the capital of Dzūkija, Liudas saw the theatrical life in the Riflemen's House: Valentinas Kirlis' activities, however, he seemed to be too young amongst his peers to understand his ideas and rushed to watch folk theatre productions.

L. Ramanauskas also has an answer about the theatre, not in Alytus, but appreciated by Alytus residents all the same, and perhaps this was an exceptional choice - the State Youth Theatre, whose performances he was probably the hungriest for. Trips to theatres in Russia also remained unforgettable. He remembers entering the course of actors. Who knows, if not prof. Irena Vaišytė's desire to select only 'chickens' who just recently had graduated from school (as she called 'clay') rather than already 'feathered' actors (Liudas was already 20 years old at the time), he could have become a theatre actor. L. Ramanauskas had actually been a film actor, even before becoming an artist of the theatre. In 1977, he was filmed in the film, 'Autumn of My Childhood', created by Gytis Lukšas according to short stories by Juozas Aputis in which Algimantas Masiulis starred.

'I saw big people but I don't know if anyone noticed me, because the premiere presented on Lithuanian television instead of 80 minutes was shown cropped by almost half an hour, which frustratingly mostly comprised the episodes I was in', recalls Liudas, who had more conversations about his place on stage.

However, L. Ramanauskas, did not become an actor, but did become a professional on the stage and on the air – as an entertainer, his voice was heard at events, discos, and the disco at Studio 3 was arranged, with like-minded people at the Cotton Palace of Culture, and was recognised as one of the best not only in Lithuania but also in the then vast homeland. After many years, Studio 3 was reborn and extended in the theatre by youth, and a jazz club created by Liudas and Vidmantas Ežerskis, as well as several other music enthusiasts, was built here as well. In Rotušės a. 2, Alytus Radio, which came from the Cotton Palace, was also opened under its roof, and the 'Prompter's Booth' programme – a show about local theatre, nominated for the competition of the best shows 'Pragiedruliai', was broadcast on the air.

Liudas was written into the history of Alytus Theatre and accepted the challenges as the festival's jury member. He is pleased that, in recent years, Alytus Theatre has been enthusiastically filled with the night watchers of the 'commune'. If the internationality and awareness of festivals and projects organised by Alytus Theatre continue to grow, according to L. Ramanauskas, the theatrical stage of Dzūkija capital has opportunities to become one of the highest recommended places not only in Lithuania's theatres, but also in Europe, where theatrical artists would come because creative experiments, seen and appreciated by spectators at 'comedy' or 'communal' festivals, can continue to turn into more or less successful premieres or similar expressions on stage.

'The most important thing is that Alytus City Theatre, as it would be in the future, remains a space to experiment with the possibility of making mistakes...,' wishes L. Ramanauskas having evaluated the city's theatrical artists' quests to find a way to connect with their audience.

Tomas Kunčinas. Anointing by relatives

Saulė Pinkevičienė

At first, it was not the theatre that I experienced, but the stage. Father Vytautas Kunčinas, the host of the events, brought me to it when I was four. There is a photo in my family album, in which I am stood with the band, 'Alytus 400 years', at the city's anniversary celebration next to my father and his colleagues. I was presented as a symbol of the city. The photo was taken at the Rifleman's House, where the studio of Alytus Theatre was for a while and where, just like in my previous folk theatre, my dad was an actor.

I have not dreamt of theatre since childhood, and the studies at the Academy of Music and Theatre have also never seemed real to me. The director Arvydas Kinderis offered me to demonstrate my abilities quite unexpectedly when in, 1999, he was selecting an acting course for Alytus City Theatre. At that time, I was studying at Alytus High Business School, where the Republican high school student competition, 'Entrepreneur Days', was held, and one of its part was an introduction. I was always invited to the team - probably Arvydas, as a member of the assessment and evaluation commission, had noticed that my strengths did not lie in accounting theory at all. In this sense, I could call Arvydas the godfather of the profession, the academic year at the academy opened up what I had not crystallised for myself - this path is mine.

Two graduates of Juozas Miltinis' course returned to work at Panevėžys Drama Theatre, and ten more were at Alytus City Theatre - although we had no moral obligation to return and no one restricted our freedom of choice, I came back for long.

I had various roles and performances on the stage of Alytus Theatre. I still remember Melvin Burgess's, 'Heroin' (directed by Dalia Kimantaitė), which was shown maybe ten times 'for the last time' (it



Tomas Kučinas, Actor of Alytus City Theater Troupe since 1997 and Deputy Director for General Needs since 2016 up to now



"No Address. No Name" (Jonas Gaižauskas, Ona Gudaitytė, Erika Jasinskaitė, Eglė Juškaitė, Vidas Vaškius, Eugenijus Rakauskas and Tomas Kliukas)

already sounded like a joke to us!) but it was still filling the theatre hall each time. Alytus Theatre received exclusive permission from the author to stage this performance, and the topic was regarded as very relevant and 'hot'. Even the police invited us to cooperate. We showed 'Heroin' as almost addiction prevention programmes in various cities. The performance was really welcomed by teenagers, and its popularity spread by word of mouth. There was no need for posters, and social media was not available at that time. My colleagues and I have discussed about how many performances we could show today without inviting the audience or intrigues. We have calculated that we could collect the big theatre hall at least three times before the marketing department would have to roll up their sleeves.

Probably the biggest challenge for me as an actor was the character made by my uncle, who was a writer, Jurgis Kunčinas. Inesa Pilvelytė, director and author of the staging of the performance, 'No address' wanted the add to the character, wanting even the anointing by the relatives on the stage to be real. Sensation! Kunčinas will play Kunčinas... When you get such an advance, a huge responsibility falls on you because the result depends on you and you alone. Not to mention that most of the characters in this performance were actually real people living in Alytus today. Among them, was my former teacher, Milda Budrienė, who actively participated in the creative process and allowed the publication of various personal archives and letters.



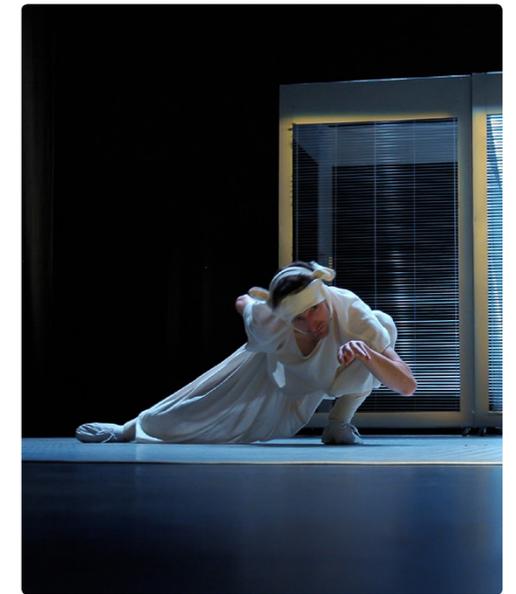
"Lithuanian Has Come"

There was no shortage of mysteries on the way to the stage. We created the role of J. Kunčinas, together with the guest actor, Martynas Vaidotas, and as the premiere was approaching the Kunčiniai House in the Resort, we organised a press conference, the leitmotif of which should have been the farm-like chopping of firewood. When journalists started gathering, Martynas cut his leg with an axe and this trauma resulted in him having to suspend from the role. The story is really peculiar, and we can only guess as to how the turn of events came about: did the spirit of the relatives make it so or did a colleague from Vilnius not know how to handle the axe? The biggest satisfaction for me was playing in a performance that the whole Kunčiniai family came to. I felt like I was playing one of my biggest and most important roles.

'No address. No name' had a wide resonance and moved not only the Resort community, awakened sentiments in people, but also united the people of Alytus through the city's cultural memory. Certainly, such a sensitive performance according to the work of J. Kunčinas could only be created by a native person of Alytus, and I see a great merit of Inesa here. Although sometimes it seems to me that today we are all from Alytus in the theatre troupe, even those who came from Samogitia, soon it will be twenty years since the graduation of the Alytus theatre course at the academy and its graduates still form the fundamental core of the troupe.

I also learned about the death of uncle Jurgis Kunčinas on stage. We were playing the performance 'In the Shadow of the Altars. Experimental Days' (director A. Kinderis). That message was told to me by one of my colleagues who worked behind the scenes, I took a deep breath and we finished the show. I never asked how it all came across, but I felt like I was locked in a glass space. Whether it's a funeral or a wedding, you're doing what you have to do on stage – crying and laughing.

Currently, I am not only an actor of the Alytus Theatre troupe, but also a deputy director for general affairs. Those responsibilities stemmed from an odd desire to prove that the theatre's affairs could be coordinated, just that we had been unlucky with the theatre keepers. I have promised myself: if I see that I do not handle my time, I will calm down and decide who I am – a creative employee or an economic worker. I have one more role – I am the leader of the trade union of theatre employees. We were established for the need for theatre in very difficult times. As employees, it was convenient for us to live, but as creators, it was certainly not. We needed a kick and we got it. The actors are active and communal only when hurt. At the moment, the number of members in the trade union has decreased, and we are engaged in, as I say, in 'connecting extracurricular activities'.



"I Loved, I Love, I Was Loved" (T. Kunčinas)



"Heroin"

Robertas Šarknickas. God's finger: die or shoot

Saulė Pinkevičienė

I believe that it was a sign of fate, that an ad in the newspaper, which my colleague read, stated that Alytus Theatre was looking for an actor. I was working in construction in Leipzig at the time, when I realised that I couldn't live without theatre...

Of all the roles in Alytus Theatre where I had to live (it comes with maturity when you use the word 'live' in a character), the role of the Teacher in Anton Chekhov's 'Seagull' is probably the most memorable. Over time, the role in the performance, 'Beatrice, Run', began to move me, which was regarded as the peak in the history of Alytus Theatre. Dalia Kimantaitė chose the character exactly for me because I was a rather naïve boy at the time; I used to quickly fall in love. That naivety took us from the stage to the City Hall Square and the City Garden. At the time, we were all real Beatrice's stars in the city! When we took the performance to Juozas Grušas Gymnasium in Kaunas, the actors of Kaunas Drama Theatre came to see it, including Regina Varnaitė, who played the older Beatrice in the performance, 'About Love, Jazz and the Devil'. Liubomiras Laucevičius remembered how the writer Juozas Grušas came to the rehearsals. 'Oh, everything's fine here', he said, though everyone was expecting comments of some kind. (A colleague and actor, Jonas Gaižauskas, reminded him of his attitude, I was always fascinated by his respect for people, from the youngest to the oldest, and I was very impressed by his diligence and curiosity.)

After 'Beatrice, Run' I had several roles on the Alytus stage, but more 'eating sunflower seeds', as the writer Jurgis Kunčinas liked to say. This was until Justinas Marcinkevičius' 'Mindaugas'. While creating this role, I started to justify Mindaugas as a historical character, but... I could not wait for the finale of the performance. In it, according to the idea of director Arvydas Kinderis, I had to raise the crown and scream the text. It was physically very difficult and didn't match with my interpretation at all, even though it was a strong idea – I won't argue. After this monologue, Dausprungas shoots me. The appearance of a real weapon on the stage, the shot, and the elements of the avant-garde raised many contradictions in the production of the romantic poem. I felt that the poet, Justinas Marcinkevičius, who had come to the premiere of



*Robertas Šarknickas, politician,
actor of Alytus City Theatre
Troupe, 2003–2005*

Mindaugas at Alytus Theatre, politely evaluated us, just as Juozas Grušas did in Kaunas: 'It's interesting, good!'

The truth is that while playing in the theatre, I was not interested in politics; I had no motivation to be. You go to the elections, vote, and that's it. While teaching drama in several schools in Alytus, I encountered social pains and disadvantaged children, and I felt that it was important for me to help them. As a politician, I am now working with a different audience on another stage, but I never say 'never' to the theatre!

Yes, when I left Alytus Theatre there were some regrets and lost ambitions from both camps. I'm most glad I wasn't disappointed with the theatre. There was the inner protest I (and colleagues) felt after graduating from acting studies at the Academy of Music and Theatre. Our curator of the actors' course for Southern Lithuania at the academy was director Dalia Tamulevičiūtė. She raised us, and then came the feeling that everything had stopped. We went back to our theatre, stayed with the same directors (and with all due respect to them), but I realised I wasn't giving away anymore. And I do not want to cheat anyone, especially myself. That emptiness opened up to me like a window to God. I started making documentaries, but out of the corner of my eye, I was all the time watching a theatre that went through a kind of art break. I was most afraid that the theatre would not be closed. It is a pity that the troupe had to endure all this, but such rumbling strengthened and united the theatre as a whole. Probably it was God's command: either you're dying or you're shooting up!

And Alytus Theatre shot up.

When Inesa Pilvelytė, with whom I had to perform many times on stage, came to lead, I crossed my fingers: How will you succeed, my friend? I knew Inesa felt like a fish in the water when organising entertainment events. I thought to myself: I wish the theatre did not use the content of the soap operas, I want films! Now I realise that what she did in that short time is a real BOMB! She raised theatre in a professional sense! I was very impressed. I believe in Alytus Theatre, and its long history, but it is only important that no one interferes with its life. A good generation of Alytus has been brought up, who are already taking their children to the theatre, broadcasting cultural awareness, and for that reason alone, the theatre must survive. It would be a real tragedy if someone tried to destroy the Alytus Theatre.

Seeing what mature performances appeared in the repertoire of Alytus Theatre, I took a risk: I offered to stage Harold Muller's, 'Silent Night'. But I also had to prepare a bomb for Inesa to hear me. No one can catch up to Monika Mironaitė in this play, but I persuaded her to play Doloresa Kazragytė. 'Shit!', she said when she learned that I had been elected to the Seimas. I understood that Doloresa was sad because the performance was a success, loved by the audience, and especially precious to us as the creators. It was supposed to be shown for a long time, but the Constitution no longer allows me to act in it. The performance had to be finished, and it is a great pity.

I am motivated by what Alytus Theatre has done in the last five years and I believe that it must become state and as a politician I intend to continue to make every effort to make it so.



"Silent Night" (with Doloresa Kazragytė)

Audingas Aleknavičius. 'Audingas, Run'

Saulė Pinkevičienė

I came to the professional theatre through the circus. As a teenager, I attended the Alytus circus studio. Two most important teachers of my profession are the head of the circus studio, Leonidas Bakanas, and the director, Arvydas Kinderis. While studying in the 12th grade, I decided to study at the Academy of Music and Theatre because acting studies seemed to be what would bring me closest to the dream of the circus, which was then the purpose of my life. Then, for the first time, I opened the door of Alytus Theatre. Director Arvydas Kinderis and director Dalia Kimantaitė agreed to help me prepare for the entrance exams and also offered to try to 'take' a secondary role in the performance. At that time, Dalia Kimantaitė had started staging the performance, 'Beatrice, Run' by Juozas Grušas. The troupe lacked male actors, so they allowed me to rehearse Julius' lead role. Of course, it was only supposed to be a temporary fix, with the perspective of a 'real actor' coming soon. But he didn't come so soon, and so, luckily the role remained with me.

I can clearly remember the excitement of the premiere of 'Beatrice, Run' when I was waiting for my entry from behind the scenes... More than anything, I wanted to run away and hide so that no one would find me. But, probably, at Alytus Theatre, I felt a taste of the stage 'drug' - stepping on stage makes you forget everything in the world. If, before the premiere I felt like a child next to real actors, we suddenly became colleagues after it. I entered the Academy of Music and Theatre on my first try and after six months, I went to live in Riga.



An interesting detail: I have experienced a nervous shock twice in my life so far and both cases occurred at the Alytus Theatre. We rehearsed 'Beatrice, Run' for six months, and it was a very exciting time. I was a high school graduate, going to school in the mornings, preparing for tomorrow's

*Audingas Aleknavičius, circus artist,
actor of Alytus Theatre troupe in
2007–2013*



"Beatrice, run" (Marius Sadauskas, Erika Jasinskaitė, Audingas Aleknavičius and Tomas Kunčinas)

lessons during breaks, and then running to the theatre. In the evening, I just fell asleep. In one rehearsal, I suddenly started crying, laughing and couldn't help it. The director told me go to smoke. I remember smoking and thinking: this time they will REALLY let me go home sooner! But Dalia just asked if we could finish, and we continued the rehearsal.

The second time happened a little bit later. At that time, I already lived in Riga, but I used to spend three of the seven days a week at Alytus Theatre. We planned to rehearse less that day, but as often happened, we failed, and I realised that I would not be able to return to Riga in transit, and the other day was a day off. Everyone wished me a to 'have a good weekend' when I left, which meant to me that I would stay alone in the theatre building, because I was staying overnight there at the time, locked in the dressing room. I remember going down to the basement of the theatre and starting to cry...

I consider myself a circus artist, although I had to be in a professional theatre for a long time. I worked as a full-time actor at Alytus Theatre for several years. I travelled from Latvia for almost ten years to partake in the performance, 'Beatrice, Run'. The theatre has given a great deal of experience which comes in handy when creating circus performances. I don't tend to look back. I live here and now, so I don't feel much nostalgia for the past, the theatre scene. The time spent at Alytus Theatre was a very great experience. Theatre and circus artists, on the other hand, can probably never be as *before*.

Vaidas Praspaliauskas.

Theatre Body *Bodybuilding*

Saulė Pinkevičienė

30 years for the theatre is not much at all. It takes time to develop, but it is always the splendid to see the transformation that I have witnessed. To be frank, five years ago I did not even know that the city of Alytus had a theatre. When the then artistic director, Petras Lisauskas, invited me to work, I opened a website and immediately became interested. I saw that the actors of the troupe had finished serious studies, and I had always wanted to work with the more promising individuals. That desire to develop provoked me to come to Alytus, although I do not like to change my environment and permanence is something that I find very reassuring.

The theatre met me, I would say, ambiguously, because I... couldn't find it. I walked around the centre of Alytus and thought: it should be this grey building, but there is no signboard. I imagined a job interview during which I would have to dance and perform, but instead we talked about my desires and aspirations, as well as the roles I had previously created. I'm not one of those preparing everything from A to Z, that's why I didn't expect them to hire me. I kept waiting for the phrase I heard in the movies: 'We'll call you'. But I didn't get it. And the only concern that remained was how to say to the director of Kelmė Theatre that I was leaving.

I have no doubt that I found myself in Alytus Theatre at the very best time, on the eve of great changes, although at the beginning I experienced a bit of a shock. During the first months,



*Vaidas Praspaliauskas, Actor of
Alytus City Theater since
2015 up to now*



"American Dream" (with Paulė Konstancija Giniotaitė, Jonas Gaižauskas, Ona Gudaitytė, Gita Strikytė, Tomas Kunčinas)

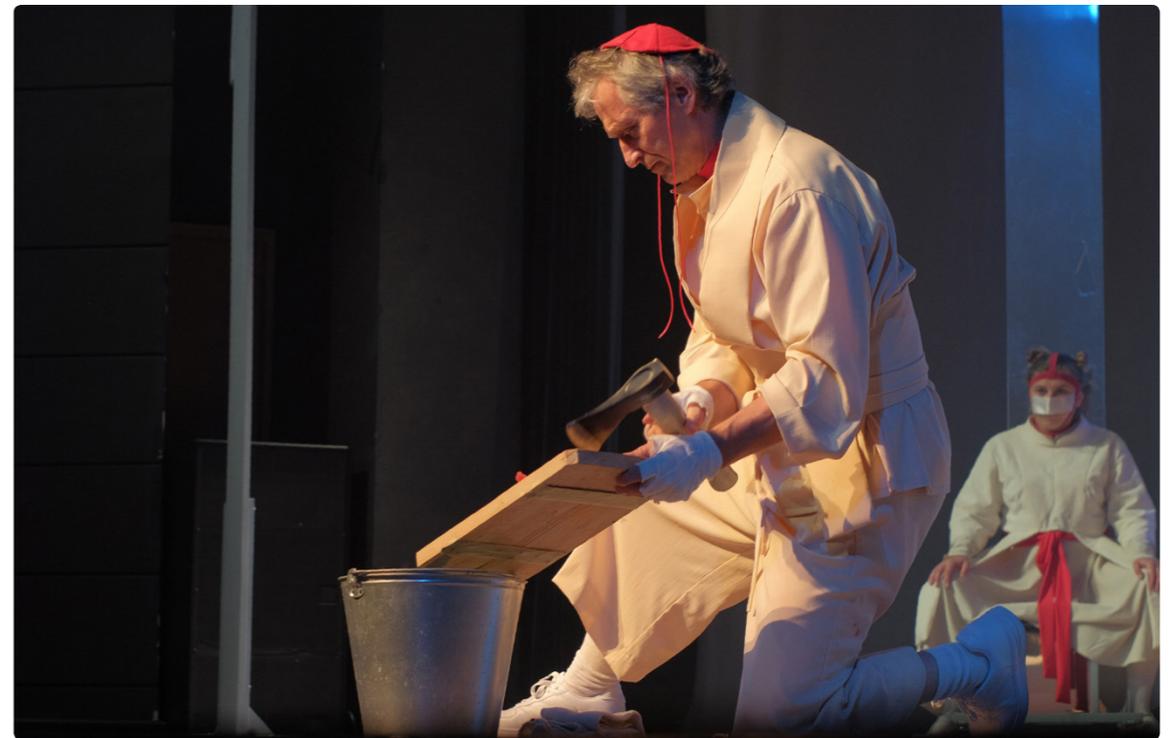
I searched and didn't find many differences. I was thinking WHY I came here from Kelmė and my native house, 300 kilometres away?! Everything changed when Albertas Vidžiūnas started rehearsing American Dream. You get a chance to work with a director of a different league and suddenly realise that there is *THAT THEATRE* that you were told about during your studies. You can assess the importance of the theatre's desire to improve and understand that its strength depends on the troupe and the administration rather than on the status – municipal or state.

Alytus Theatre was growing vigorously, and the troupe was improving together with the newly arriving guest directors. When you can get so many roles, you are able to take part in every performance – it is probably a dream of all actors. Certainly, I myself also am one of those who like to push against others, I like to compete, and I will always make an effort, even if I am not given a role. Before the lockout, for a moment I was overwhelmed by the feeling that I would already like to make a 'stop' because there too much of everything going on at once, just like a real marathon. The next season of 2020–2021 is also busy to the maximum and we will have even seven premieres. From the actor's point of view, it is fantastic.

We are the youngest in the troupe (I am a theatre peer, I am 30), several generations of actors have already emerged from Alytus Theatre, our theatre school, the perceptions between the generations are different. We, the younger ones, had a crazy dedication to work for the theatre. I remember rehearsing the mono-performance, 'ŽuvėdPRA' until night (director Andra Kavaliauskaitė). The elders were driving us out saying they had families and their own



“(Not) Children’s Games” (with Andra Kavaliauskaitė)



“Arena of Freedom”

lives to live, although I know they used to *do* the same as us themselves. When the young maximalist mind cools, you realise that they are telling the truth and someday will also want to live in peace. Acting is a spiritual specialty, perhaps a vocation and just doing working hours along will not suffice. The action on stage is something mesmerizing which you are attracted to. Sometimes you curse it but you can’t do without it. Your work is being evaluated here and now, and sometimes (rarely, but it happens) the performance *sounds*. You give to the viewer, and he in turn, gives back to you, and that intangible thing attracts you back on stage. On the other hand, I probably couldn’t be in the theatre and do nothing else, because it requires spiritual devotion, and I sometimes need to be discharged, and release my energy. So, I like to present the events where I can follow *freestyle* and be a director myself.

If the older generation of actors in Alytus created the body of the theatre, then together we are now strengthening its muscles. We participate in the process during which the theatre gains its strength, direction, and acceleration. I hope we will grow and not stop because what happened during the last five years, when I came to Alytus Theatre, has been a very big leap. We’ve staged a lot of performances, we were awarded with the Golden Cross of the Stage, which is incredible for a municipal theatre in general, is it not? But you can’t live on memories, you need to continuously progress and move forwards. I like challenges, new things, life is important to me on stage (fellow actors should not get angry if sometimes their live reactions are provoked by small pranks during performances that prevents monotony). I’m in full support of never having to be afraid to test yourself out.



"Arena of Freedom" (with Vidas Vaškius)

Vincas Vaičiulis.

Development Opportunity

Saulė Pinkevičienė

I have been an actor in the Alytus Theatre troupe since 2016. It is no secret that no one is waiting for young, graduating actors since the competition is so fierce. The courses gathered at the Academy of Music and Theatre, in which the directors raise the actors for themselves, do not even guarantee a place in the theatre. Students tend to cling to the city where they are studying, or which is close to their home. I studied in Šiauliai so it seemed that the Šiauliai or Panevėžys theatres were best to me. But sometimes it takes a while to wait and pursue a dream, and I always knew I wanted to be in the theatre, no matter the city. At the end of my studies, I received an offer to work in the art house of one town as an *art something* but I am glad that the announcement of Alytus Theatre came to my attention in at just the right time, and so, here I am.

From my point of view, I came to a functioning, creative, and repertoire-like theatre. I want to believe that I personally contribute to its fame and greater visibility. I am pleased to hear from former classmates: 'Vincas is in that theatre, they do night festivals' (it's about the night theatrical event session, 'Com•moon•a').

Alytus Theatre offered me a lot, I immediately got roles and it was not so long that I was waiting and not getting opportunities which would allow me to grow. It was weird at first, especially after graduation, when the scene suddenly becomes your job and you get paid for it. There is still such a strange barrier that needs to be crossed so that you,



Vincas Vaičiulis, Actor of Alytus City Theater since 2016 up to now



"Angels of Scrooge Street" (with Vaidas Praspaliauskas)

being a student yesterday, can progress to become a colleague to the senior actors in the troupe and can offer something to them. In my opinion, the fact that young people are joining the troupe brings a positive atmosphere and a kind of beneficial competition to life. It's always interesting to listen to how the theatre was dealing in the past or what events happened (senior colleagues dive into their memories: 'Do you remember how...?') because times have changed a lot and nowadays the theatre is very different.

An actor can never have too many roles. I am very glad to be able to realise myself and have the opportunity to work with different directors. Characteristic and comedy amplua is my cup of tea, while dramatic roles are my aspiration where I would like to develop my skills, take on as many roles as possible and improve significantly.

I really enjoy performing for children. 'Hedgehog in the Fog' (director Andra Kavaliauskaitė), 'Angels of Scrooge Street' (director Arvydas Lebeliūnas), 'Hunchback Musician' (director Jonas Gaižauskas) are nice performances not just for the children, but also for adults. It is not easy to act for children because they do not lie and cannot pretend or keep polite silence, as



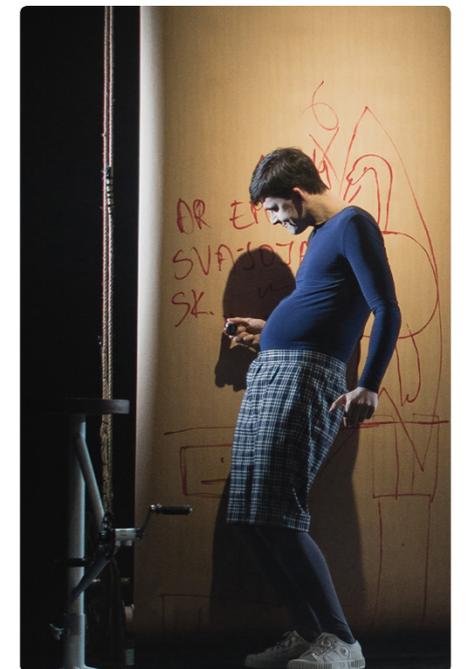
"Angels of Scrooge Street" (Vidas Vaškius, Erika Jasinskaitė, Ona Gudaiūtė)



"Hunchback Musician" (with Eugenijus Rakauskas, Vaidas Praspaliauskas)

adult audience sometimes does. But the kids are different, one day you discover a recipe for the role and the next, you miss it again. Children's theatre is immersive, I like being active, even if I can't take a second to relax while performing. It's nice to be gaining more and more trust from viewers. We have such a tradition: Day performances for children are shown at Alytus City Theatre on Saturdays, and for several seasons I have been noticing how the hall is getting increasingly full with parents and children.

The lockout gave us an unexpected experience when together with fellow actors we 'were knitting' *woollen conversations* and communicated with the seniors remotely. A virtual, but lively connection has remained (sometimes seniors write to me about how strawberries grew in the garden). We are waiting for the older viewers at the theatre and hopefully they will come one day.



"D Effect"

Sigitas Jakubauskas. When will Alytus be theatrical again?

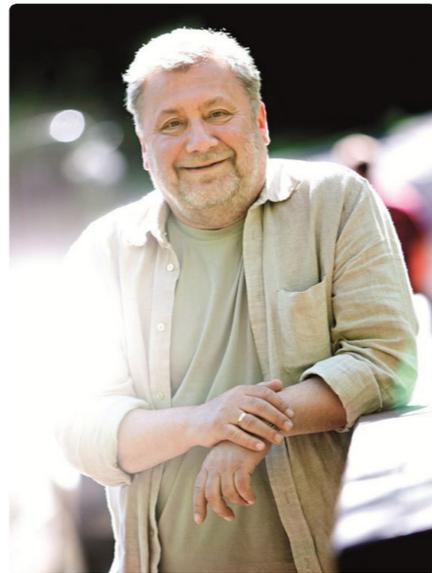
Darius Babijonas

‘Alytus. *Theatrical*’, said Sigitas Jakubauskas, talking about the city where his interaction with the stage began. He returned to his role, more than 40 years after the beginning of his acting career and performed in the 100th production of Alytus City Theatre’s, ‘Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone.’ He was invited here by director Arvydas Lebeliūnas, with whom he had previously worked in the performance ‘Breadmaker’s Wife’. The role of Beadmaker performed by S. Jakubauskas received laurels in Alytus and Varėna festivals, as well as being awarded Actor of the Year of Šiauliai city and presented of the Golden Stage Cross.

Being involved with in the performance, ‘Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone’ was special for Sigitas.

‘A sensitive moment. Just imagine, classmates from all three schools at the premiere: From Alytus School No. 1, Junčionys, Pivašiūnai schools, and relatives’, - recalls the actor, saying that he felt really welcomed by the theatre team, where he was glad to see his almost fellow Ona Gudaitytė, other actors who grew up in Dzūkija capital, as well as Šiauliai University pop art graduates Vaidas Praspaliauskas and Vincas Vaičiulis.

The surprising thing about the really welcomed performance of Alytus and other spectators is the name mentions Mindaugas, while the performance is actually... about Vytautas. Despite this, so-called organisational embarrassment,



Sigitas Jakubauskas, Theater countryman, Laureate of the awards of the festival held in Alytus, actor



“Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone” (Sigitas Jakubauskas)

‘Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone’, according to Sigitas, is a good performance that should be seen by even wider audience.

‘On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of its first production, I would like Alytus Theatre, which has almost everything, to have more faith, offer as many dramaturgies as possible, but... not to please the audience. What else? To search, and if necessary, not to be afraid and to give something up’, said S. Jakubauskas, who knows the Alytus troupe as receptive, talented, and at the same time very busy, they, according to local traditions, have not only to play, but also to organise municipal festivals and participate in them; in other words, to do the work of the city’s cultural centre.

According to Sigitas, Alytus Theatre has the opportunity to become exceptional and really stand out, as opposed to being just one more cultural house. Of course, it is a question of the situation in Alytus, where the city theatre now exists, as, compared to earlier, or in the time of that *theatrical* Alytus, for example, the Riflemen’s House or the Cotton Palace with full halls were important.

‘Now there are halls, there is theatre, but where is the spectator?’, asked the stage professional, who has been active for more than four decades and has had worked through time periods when the audience was very small and people hardly gathered for the performances,



“Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone” (with Vaidas Praspaliauskas)

even in one of the oldest Lithuanian theatres in Šiauliai. Then I had to be on stage but not performing in the theatre. For example, when the performances were not popular during the Sajūdis period, we created a musical project of actors ‘Cocoa’.

It is interesting that during the humorous project, Sigitas appeared on the theatre stage. After Alytus and the current Marijampolė (formerly Kapsukas) pupils were televised on the national television on *Telering*, the broadcast director hinted to Domininkas Dabriška, who was seeing the artistic level of the young Dzūkai, about the ‘one’ who told a joke about how the people of Suvalkija ‘lock their wells’. D. Dabriška and Valentinas Kirlis suggested *Jakubauskiukas* to consider the profession of acting. Until then, this seemed unattainable to him, but the idea of sports and handball trainings with coach Vldas Zokas was soon replaced by the intriguing concept of the stage and so, contrary to his original plans, he entered Irena Vaišytė’s actors course at the Lithuanian State Conservatory.

Now, looking back, I would like to thank Ona Būtėnienė, a former Lithuanian language and literature teacher at School No. 1 and former Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas’ student for presenting literature and theatre to me. The teachers were also Sigitas’ parents.

S. Jakubauskas, who graduated from his acting studies in Vilnius, went to work with director Aurelija Ragauskaitė at Šiauliai Drama Theatre in 1977, together with Saulius Bareikis, Olegas Ditkovskis, Virginija Kochanskytė, Nijolė Oželytė, Antanas Venckus and other classmates, where he created characters ranging from the priest to the devil, performed more than 100 roles, and was awarded the title of Lithuanian Meritorious Artist (1986), St. Christopher Statue (1996) and throughout his career, received many other awards. Sigitas continues to work at the sun city Theatre, and did not refuse to perform in Alytus, the Idiot Theatre or the cinema, where he has already partaken in various Lithuanian and foreign films. One of them is ‘Good Morning, Alytus’, the creator and director of which, Arvydas Kinderis, showed the capital of Dzūkija as new and previously unseen to Sigitas, who played the role of his grandfather, Adomas.

‘I am Dzūkas and it is really nice in my homeland’, S. Jakubauskas was delighted to receive the award for the best actor at the Dalia Tamulevičiūtė’s Memorial Festival.

He visits Dzūkija whenever he gets the chance, less often with performances now, but he still travels from time to time. He sometimes speaks about his homeland with his colleagues from Dzūkija Juozas Bindokas, Dalia Jančiauskas, and Juozas Žibūda. Even earlier, he used to discuss it with other people who worked at Šiauliai Theatre - Teresė Maliukevičiūtė, Gytis Padegimas, and Leonas Zmirskas.

‘I remember my native Pivašiūnai, childhood Junčionis, youth in Alytus well and believe that I will never forget it, because it is really sentimental. I will not betray Šiauliai... as well,’ frankly said Sigitas, who was also using Dzūkija dialect on stage with J. Bindokas in the performance, ‘Doctor and Mangaryta’ awarded for the best production of Lithuanian dramaturgy.

Paata Tsikolia. I Draw Inspiration from People

At Alytus City Theatre, where I was staging my very first performance, creative collaboration has begun through the Sacartvel (Georgia) network of regional theatres and its director Tengiz Khukhia. Alytus Theatre already has a good relationship with the Poti Theatre, where I created three performances.

The inspiration I received to stage a classical work came from Alytus City Theatre. I've never directed William Shakespeare's works before, so when I was asked to work with classics, I thought maybe 'Macbeth' was a worthy option. I felt that this work could help me demonstrate a relationship with the experiences of modern cruelty and violence, common to several post-Soviet countries, such as Lithuania and Sacartvel.

I look at each new project quite practically. I know what results I want to achieve, but I have to consider both where I work and with whom. I always draw inspiration from the people I work with. That is why this production of 'Macbeth' could not have been any different because it reflects the connections between me and Alytus Theatre, as well as its actors in searching for and discovering ideas in creative cooperation. If we tried to do it again sometime, it would probably be a completely different piece of theatre.

I have to admit that Alytus City Theatre is a really interesting and professional space, and it was an excitement to work there. It turned out to be pleasantly unexpected that in many cases, often points of view coincided. From the very first meeting, we felt a close connection and rehearsed a lot, productively every day, which is always an important part of a good job (and its outcome).

I came from Tbilisi, and Alytus is a fairly small city compared to the capital of Sacartvel, and if I had to have any difficulties, I... lacked the noise and pace of my city to which I am accustomed. But, I believe it was a useful unexpectedness because I had far more time for creativity than I usually have while working in my hometown.



Paata Tsikolia (Sacartvel), director, has been collaborating with Alytus City Theatre since 2020



"Macbeth" (director Paata Tsikolia)



"Macbeth"



"Macbeth" (Vaidas Praspaliauskas and Andra Kavaliauskaitė)

Oganesas and Rūta: 'We create places for ourselves, and people gather around. That's what we wish for the theatre as well...'

Darius Babijonas

It did not meet expectations, we thought that something was wrong, we were disappointed...' – Oganesas Arakelian and Rūta Kavaliauskaitė-Arakelian recall their first acquaintance with the performances of Alytus City Theatre. This couple, that started an almost cultural bar ('Fenix') in the capital of Dzūkija, taking care of several other alternative places in Alytus ('Žinyčia' in the First Alytus, 'Greenhouse' in Žaliojoje street and 'Subine' in Town Hall), over time from critics has become one of the city's most loyal entrepreneurs.

'Maybe we did not attend the right performance right after we came to work in Alytus; before all our bars and other activities, we received invitations and hurried to evaluate the local theatre,' says Arakelianai. The second meeting with the local dramaturgy was also not inspiring. After buying tickets for the performance instead of the prizes, none of ten students came to the theatre.

'Why don't the children appreciate local theatre at all?' thought Rūta with Oganesas but she found no answer at the time. The fact that people did not even know where the theatre was proved to be extremely disappointing. It was not really clear how to explain it - there was no theatre cafe in Alytus where one could sit and talk after the performances, and inviting people to your bar was not yet popular ...

Something was still missing, but the third time was crucial - Rūta and Oganesas discovered festivals organised by the city theatre – first comedies, then 'Com•moon•a' and they even became members of the jury, whose open opinion is expected not only in the closed circle of the commission, but also on Facebook.



Oganesas Arakelian and Rūta Kavaliauskaitė-Arakelian

So far, no explorer has found out how or why Arakelianai have become real enthusiasts of Alytus Theatre, originally they were almost 'haters', but in the past few years, there has not been an autumn when they would not buy tickets to all the festival events. At the time, Oganesas' remarked that the theatre was not comparable to anything and with its reading, I guess, even without a race, would surpass the posts of some hired critics on social media.

'In fact, Alytus Theatre did not impress us with its bohemia. After Vilnius, it seemed very modest here, and the idea and ability to invite not only 'the same' to the theatre, but also those who are not 'interested in theatre', says Rūta wondering if Alytus theatrical artists are modest at the bar, well, maybe with the exception of some directors...

'Inesa has created an atmosphere which we are trying to keep by inviting artists to spend evenings with us, thus stimulating the festival spirit to some extent,' says Oganesas, who calls the bar his scene, the comfort zone, and Facebook - a part of his work which is sometimes a bit 'overacted' or like a 'drama queen'...

Arakelianai notice that Alytus Theatre is creating more and more boldly, not for the masses, not only 'work, buy, and die', but to go to the performances with the idea that 'you will see something'.

'That's what a theatre should be like', says one of the most noticeable couples in the capital of Dzūkija, whose main bar is connected to the city theatre by a similar story, of Andra Kavaliauskaitė's and other of Alytus' latest performances.

'We create places for ourselves, and people come to us. We wish this to the theatre and its host city municipality, which, no matter who the mayor is at the time, is unfortunately still affected 'by industrial Vasiukai, the desire to destroy the aerodrome, the theatre. But, without this we will not create a better quality of life in a green city, just as we will not compete with other regions in terms of the number of jobs,' say Arakelianai who travels around Europe a lot and offers Alytus not to return to desperate industrial fame, but to a post-resort, post-industrial, and exciting part of the city that attracts local and foreign tourists, and does not urge itself to overtake, but invites people to come instead.

Julius Sabatauskas: 'The city must care about its own theatre, not just the political one...'

Darius Babijonas

'In 15 years, we will have a big hall as well,' objected Julius Sabatauskas, a member of the Parliament who had heard one of the heads of Alytus City Municipality speaking at the 15th anniversary celebration of the theatre. Having said that, Alytus would actually have a big hall of the theatre within five years, but he had to prove it with works. As not is often the case in politics, the promise has become a reality, and in celebrating their 20th anniversary, Alytus theatrical artists already had the big hall.

Julius remembers that the 20th anniversary of the theatre was perhaps even harder for him than the work he had done, because he had to accept a lot of thanks, he had to talk a lot on stage, his mouth got dry and were no drinks available nearby. Now, on the 30th anniversary, the politician says that then he may not have looked on the stage the way he wanted, but the dream came true and the opening of the great hall thankfully did not take another 15 years. J. Sabatauskas is grateful to the then Minister of Culture Roma Žakaitienė for understanding and helping by providing the funds of the State Investment Program (SIP) for the theatre hall, which required more than one million euros. The minister was also not indifferent to Alytus, giving over the new premises, equipping the them to the college and Jurgis Kunčinas Public Library. The head



Julius Sabatauskas

of the latter, Giedrė Bulgakovienė, sometimes calls Julius a 'Chin', but at least in the past, this did not prevent him from sitting on the ground during events and occasionally it was necessary to find chairs themselves.

'Is it necessary to be born here to take care of Alytus?' asks J. Sabatauskas, who was born in Komi and started his political career in the capital of Dzūkija. He was sitting not only on the floor of Jurgis Kunčinas library during the events, but also on



25th anniversary of Alytus City Theater

temporary benches during the construction of the theatre great hall. I had to watch the videos of Alytus theatre performances and discuss them with Arvydas Kinderis for half a day, staying up to the very early morning. Although at that time, in the 1990s, they were both elected to the city council, but not on the 'same boat': Julius was a social democrat and Arvydas was a conservative at that time. Since then, it has been 30 years since both the first term of the self-government and the first performance of the theatre took place.

Julius admits that he felt like a beginner during the past three decades but with the help of relatives, colleagues and voters, he landed, both feet on the ground. Alytus Theatre, which has also overcome crises, is now not only a theatre that grew out of 'first clothes', but also an active member of the local community, even is the main organiser of Dzūkija's capital festival, organiser of several festivals and also the initiator of a performance revealing the city's Jewish history.

'Alytus Theatre has never followed a popular path, but instead, developed its own and achieved quality over time', says Julius, who sees such performances connecting different generations such as 'Tūla' by Jurgis Kunčinas and 'No address. No name', especially with music written by Noah: 'Outside Alytus, rain spreads to the north, over roads, homesteads and forests...' as a benchmark for quality.

Alytus theatrical artists are able to feel not only the past of their city, but also the present. The politician, born on an artistic day - during April - believes that he knows how to react to current events and make fun of them, which he has done by parodying his employers' city politicians time and time again. Would local actors become even more satirical by changing their dependence on the municipal budget to the status of a state theatre?

J. Sabatauskas claims that the city and politicians must care about their own theatre, not only that political one that takes place each Thursday in the council, but also the real one. Otherwise, if its maintenance became only a state privilege, the parliamentarian guesses that the municipality would stop caring for such an organization, as this happened with Alytus School of Fine Crafts.

Dalia Radzvilienė.

Seam *Looseness*

Saulė Pinkevičienė

I never thought that I would become a full-time tailor of Alytus Theatre but the theatre gradually 'tamed' me and now, I have been sewing costumes for its performances for 30 years. At the beginning, there was still a household service plant in Alytus, and I was a young specialist. I was not told that it was for the theatre and that nobody took such (*weird*) orders. In fact, it needs a lot of imagination at least to imagine what they might want from you and also the patience to fulfil the orders as required. But I experienced it only later.

I have said only once in all these years: 'No, I'm not going to sew this!' I am talking about costumes for the performance, 'Barbora Radvilaitė' (director Arvydas Kinderis, artist Julija Skuratova) which had to be ordered in the sewing house of the National Opera and Ballet Theatre. A similar challenge was the performance, 'Other People's Life is Other People's Life' (director Gildas Aleksa, scenography and costume designer Kotryna Daujotaitė), because he needed stylised Renaissance costumes. When you no longer fit in with the petticoats and carcasses in the sewing house, you can start thinking that tailors really had their work cut out for them in ancient times!...

But even a modern theatre tailor needs constant improvement. I had to learn to sew headwear, even a cylinder hat, and once I had to sew a soutane (It is good that Beinoravičius, a priest tailor from Alytus, came to the sewing house to make loops at that time. I quickly looked at his needlework and learnt how to sew soutanas.).



Dalia Radzvilienė, Alytus theater studios, later Alytus city theater tailor since 1990 up to now



"The life of other people is the life of other people". Costume (artist Kotryna Daujotaitė)

I have had to work with many famous theatre artists but I really like working with Artūras Šimonis. We work together quite well; he gives me freedom - within the limits of my imagination. The artist Neringa Keršulytė made very interesting costumes for the performance 'Hedgehog in the Fog' (director Andra Kavaliauskaitė). It is always interesting to work with artist Gintarė Markevičienė from Alytus. In particular, a lot of meticulous handiwork had to be put into the scenography and costumes of the play, 'Hunchback Musician' (director Jonas Gaižauskas), created by her. Director A. Kavaliauskaitė stands out with her unique vision. She created costumes herself for her mono-performances, 'Seen', 'Ki(t)okia'), and sometimes she asks for my advice as well.

The actors who come to the sewing house to try clothes on are different from the usual clients - it is usually their wishes which I ought to consider, but when on the stage the designer has all the influence over the intricate details of the outfit. The funniest client of the theatre, of course, is the actor Vaidas Praspaliauskas, and it is very easy to sew for him. No actor is



“Cat’s house”. Costume (artist Gintarė Markevičienė)



whimsical, we all talk about performances. As a spectator, I have my own opinion, on what I liked or what I would change. For example, lighting, if it doesn’t highlight the beauty of the whole outfit on stage, and I see both the performance as a whole and each costume individually.

Sometimes it’s hard to get an accurate picture from a sketch provided by an artist, you need to learn more about the hero who will wear that costume, and the actors themselves are very helpful here. Of course, there is always a lot of freedom between the sketch and the result of the tailor’s imagination, but that is the most difficult thing – to learn to master the thoughts of the artist of the performance and understand what they want from me.

Sometimes fellow tailors ask why my surname is not on performance posters. I answer: ‘I’m a shadow without which there would be no performance.’



Artūras Šimonis. The Challenge of Remaining Active and Relevant

I have been cooperating with Alytus City Theatre since 2004, creating scenography and stage costumes for more than twenty performances. I could subjectively divide this time into two stages: the 1st – from the above-mentioned 2004, which lasted for three years when I mainly worked with directors, Arvydas Kinderis and Dalia Kimantaitė, and the 2nd – from 2014 to now, which has lasted for over six years, when I have been working with different directors, not only from Lithuania, but from abroad as well. A significant amount of time has passed, but a great deal has been achieved. During this period, Lithuanian theatres as a whole have changed a lot alongside Alytus Theatre. Its people, principles of work, choice of dramaturgy, aesthetic visual language or stylistic priorities of acting have all been altered.



Artūras Šimonis, artist and scenographer, has been cooperating with Alytus City Theatre since 2004

Since I have recently been working with various directors at Alytus Theatre, I have had to listen to and understand various directors' solutions, visually implementing them and professionally justifying them in a specific environment, defined by the troupe or technical possibilities. Since the performances are staged in a short time frame, the work must have both specialised mobility and a unique creative discipline. In order to achieve the most compelling results, it is necessary to envisage the whole process of staging a future performance in great detail.

Alytus Theatre has two stages: the big stage and the chamber stage. The right choice of stage greatly determines the technical and artistic potential of the future performance, the general acting style and, certainly, the totality of the scenography. Although a lot of theatrical sceneries have been created for performances, I tend not to look back and not to be emotion-



"Macbeth"

ally attached to the creative process of a given performance. The specific results of my work are varied, given the totality of the performances - there are both elusive and sound works. Often a performance that was warmly welcomed at the premiere is simply 'killed' after a while or due to rare shows. Hence sometimes it is important to understand organisational consistency as well. It is a relief to know that the theatre is not afraid of creative experiments and is friendly and open to artistic dialogue. And considering the whole stiff cultural context of Alytus city, being active, relevant and creative is a considerable challenge, which, interestingly, the new strategy of Alytus city theatre management is focused on.

I would like to wish the theatre troupe and the whole theatre patience, professional motivation, awareness and new creative ambitions in the future.



"In the shadow of the altars. Experimental days" (artist Artūras Šimonis)



"Macbeth" (Eugenijus Rakauskas, Ona Gudaitytė, Eglė Juškaitė and Eglė Kordiukovaitė)



„Arena of Freedom“ (set designer Artūras Šimonis)

Gintarė Markevičienė. Supposed Simplicity

Saulė Pinkevičienė

During my studies, I faced difficult moments in searching for ideals, teachers, my attitude, and myself. I was saved by his extremely bold creations, participation in the first avant-garde fashion festivals and going into everyday society with original and shocking clothes. It was my way expressing myself. I remember having a life-changing, favourite crocheted winter hat with a 'chimney-stem' on the top of the head and a cavity in the tree branches in it where the cuckoo hung. As I was walking, it moved and swayed as if it really was a singing bird. Passers-by on the street reacted extremely vividly, and I embraced their positive emotions, fulfilling the growing belief that the magic of clothing existed. I miss such a student street heat in my work. I hid in Alytus. When creating scenography and costumes on the theatre stage for children's performances, I recovered – the freedom of fantasy, unexpected decisions and discoveries returned.

I am a more practical costume designer. Stage clothes, scenography and the whole language of theatre are, for me, constant improvement and a quest; they are an inevitable component in the framework of the specialty. The rules of playing with children in the theatre are extremely bold, strong and innovative. They need a different mindset, changing means, cognition and the feeling of possibility. I'm not just talking about myself. The whole multi-layered theatre organism changes in a moment; children's performances are formed in such a vortex.



*Gintarė Markevičienė, Artist,
has been collaborating with the Alytus
City Theater since 2013*



"Ambrozijus, Purkius and..."

I gained my experience in children's theatre solely by working in Alytus; with breaks, I have created costumes for four Alytus theatre performances. What's most impressive to me personally is the knowledge that the same team that staged William Shakespeare or Anton Chekhov yesterday is just as responsible, with the same intellect and ingenuity, for creating a children's performance today. The supposed simplicity of theatre for children lies behind several very complex rules, requirements, and challenges.

Creating for kids is not easy. Children and their wild imaginations cannot be fooled by simple trifles. Expressing certain truths to the imagination of the little ones through scenography, costume, movement, text, music, light, and other means of expression requires both a strong and specific imagination, and knowing the rules. I admire scenographers and costume designers who have courage on stage to completely distance themselves from any reality, from functional things. Probably in children's theatre, that courage is especially useful, because in an extremely short time it is necessary to create an optimal effect, involve the spectator in the theatre and sow the seed of light wisdom in it.

The aesthetics of the stage image is very important to me so that the costumes are complete, and the details are in harmony. Sometimes, I may take even an overly cautious position. It happened that in reality – in the changing room – the costume looks really glamorous,



„Ambrozijus, Purkius and...“ (artist Gintarė Markevičienė)



“Cat’s house“

and on stage it becomes neutral, its too gentle character does not resonate with the audience. Only in the directing context of the whole performance - in the movement of the actor, in the background of the scenography, in the lighting of the stage, the costume intensifies and acquires the real image. Sometimes, even the details of modern street fashion, supplemented with compositional means, help to build a thread of connections with the audience on the theatre stage very quickly. I am fascinated by how very subtle things can be talked about on stage with everyday signs using a costume. These moments were used in the performances for children, ‘Ambrozijus, Purkius ir...’ (director Inesa Pilvelytė), ‘Hunchback Musician’ (director Jonas Gaižauskas).

What creativity is, in a small-town theatre, is understood when you are limited by a performance budget, especially if you are a costume designer. Watching OKT’s performance, ‘Cathedral’, I have calculated that the chains hung above the stage used in its scenography alone had to cost about 3,500 euros, not even considering the other costs of the performance. Usually, the budget of Alytus Theatre for one of its performances is far from the price of the chains, so it is necessary to manage with a smaller amount than other theatres can afford. But the result needs to be the same. For example, for the performance, ‘Hunchback Musician’, according to the estimate, we could only buy a fairy wig for one costume, but then there would be no costume, or a meter of dress fabric, even though we needed ten. What to do? The solution is either to find a sponsor or rethink your ideas. Sometimes looking at things from



"Cat's house"

a different angle leads to certain unexpected discoveries, and they can often be much more cost-effective and a great success!

In addition to my work as a costume designer, I experience the pleasure of the overall creative process of any performance, when after long rehearsals, via communication with the director and actors, I can watch the performance be born, grow, be refined, and understand how the smallest details are searched for, discussed and analysed. The greatest joy is when your work clearly enhances the visuals of the performance, accentuates the actor's character or when the scenery is ingeniously incorporated into the acting. It is also immensely satisfying when the costume sketches, after endless trying on and the careful sewing of the wonderful theatre tailor, Dalia Radzvilienė, turns into real material bodies, that start to move, perform, and become THEATRE. Then I forget the times that I went around Alytus ten times in search of a piece of cloth, that a block of paper is full of sketches or that I was afraid and worried. You became part of the performance, the common spirit, you flew somewhere far away, where childhood and imagination are still alive and needed.

Every year before Christmas, Alytus Theatre releases the premiere of a new children's performance. Some live only a year, two, while others are successful for much longer. It is difficult to say what a modern children's theatre should be like, but it seems to me that our Alytus theatre has chosen a very promising path, by inviting creators of different characters, experiences and imaginations to create children's performances. In this theatre, the performances for children are especially diverse: from subtle, cosy, full of light, meticulous, fair to modern, drastic, exciting and shocking. Successful forms that affect the viewer are constantly being sought after and may be the most unexpected. For instance, the performance, 'Zuikis Puikis' (director Andra Kavaliauskaitė), was created based on children's drawings and contact with the viewer was established before the stage.

With each performance, Alytus Theatre also learns from children, observes and analyses how they accept performances, because the goal is one – to live. The performance, 'Ambrozius, Purkius ir...' has been shown for ten years. 'Angels of Scrooge Street' (director Arvydas Lebeliūnas) is also the one you still want to return to at Christmas time because there is so much feeling and light there! It is one of those performances that meets the viewer's expectation, the family's expectation – the relationship between both parents and children. 'Hunchback Musician' resurrected the Lithuanian saga. A saga in which you feel that our mythology is no worse than the images of antiquity. I would like this performance to get into the heart like a seed. Theatre for children is not just entertainment, it is a difficult mission.



"Hunchback Musician" (artist Gintarė Markevičienė)

Indrė Puišytė-Šidlauskienė.

No Lack of Ingenuity

Analysing my relationship with productions as a creator of performance choreography, I come to the conclusion that the most important thing for the creative process and its outcome is the fusion of mine and the director's creative thoughts and the quality of collaboration with the troupe, rather than the choice of the theme. If creative connections are made, fantastic things can be achieved in every play, story, or theme. I am glad to find such connections in Alytus City Theatre, where I am always happy to come back.

In 2014, at Alytus City Theatre, I had the honour of creating a choreography for the musical, 'Fire Hunt and Beaters', by Giedrius Kuprevičius. During the creative process, we literally lived in a theatre, making a close inner connection with people and the environment, and everything became very cosy. This is how the cooperation started and now, I am still invited to create at Alytus City Theatre from time to time. There are no problems working with the right alongside the action and I am always pleased with the result. The creative process becomes highly enjoyable, especially when the troupe is open-minded, the actors are capable of moving, improvising, not resisting my choreographic ideas, and quickly achieving what I want.

Alytus Theatre constantly presents surprises. It is very pleasing to observe how its repertoire has been changing and become plentiful, and how cooperation with various Lithuanian and foreign directors has increased. Not only the people of the city, but also the theatre troupe has had the opportunity to grow, improve, as well as get involved with more diverse forms of theatre and various different ways of expression. I really appreciate the theatre's contribution to the city's youth. 'Com•moon•a', a night session of theatrical



Indrė Puišytė-Šidlauskienė, choreographer, has been collaborating with the Alytus City Theater since 2014



„Fire Hunt and Beaters“

events, has become traditional, and it could set a great example to other theatres of engaging the younger generation in the arts. Alytus Theatre makes a lot of efforts to attract spectators and chooses unexpected means for it – there is no lack of ingenuity!

The biggest creative impression on Alytus stage was left by 'Fire Hunt and Beaters'. It was a very interesting creative process, full of artistic exploration, a great relationship with director Gytis Padegimas, composer Giedrius Kuprevičius, artist Birutė Ukrinaitė, choir directors, Asta Miknienė and Raimondas Martinkėnas and the whole creative team, including performers.

Another very interesting work is the open-air extravaganza, 'Šiurpės' (a contemporary genre of children's folklore). An enchanting space was chosen for realising an unconventional idea – a stage in the middle of Dailidė Lake. Director Albertas Vidžiūnas provided a lot of space for movement. It is very unfortunate that 'Šiurpės' was shown only once, although there were plans to move it to the stage.

I should also mention 'Macbeth' (director Paata Tsikolia). Two days before the premiere, it was postponed due to lockout. Everyone is well aware of its story which is a complex and one of the most commonly staged plays in the world. Probably only a few theatres could boast of never having this production in the history of their repertoire. The international creative team, excellent collaboration, non-standard directing solutions, infusion of movement into the production, the visual side of the performance, and fantastic music all inspire and give great inner satisfaction from the plentiful creativity. It was a great responsibility and pleasure to contribute to the creation of this performance. I believe in its future!

Petras Lisauskas.

„Love & Hate“

I really desire to rediscover myself in some role on the stage of Alytus Theatre again; it is insanely good to be invited! I believe that the time will come when I will step out onto the stage of Alytus Theatre, my heart trembling with excitement, and yet so far, as a theatrical frog-traveller, I am still jumping around various world scenes, mostly in Scandinavia.

It still boils in me: the phase of our 'Love & Hate' relationship is still echoing in me.

Artistic Director - I dreamed of such a position and I was offered it at Alytus Theatre, and I thought selfishly that I could cope with it and all its accompanying responsibilities. And here the fate itself offered it to me and in Alytus - my hometown. The infrastructure of Alytus City Theatre is really satisfying. Not perfect, but very good, both the building and the status - the only professional theatre in all of Southern Lithuania.

My brain was overwhelmed by a myriad of projects that all looked very good at the ideas stage, but having 'let it down', I changed my mind... I feel that my biggest problem as an art director (from my perspective) was the lack of structural thinking, I didn't realise how institutions of this kind worked.

I still believe that 'project-like' thinking was my greatest strength. The troupe and viewers would only have won if the performance, shown five or six times, would have been put to one side in a drawer for the next season. But that required good management both in Alytus and on tour. Its management's poor structure that is a problem of all Lithuanian theatres and also



Petras Lisauskas, dancer, actor, director, artistic director of Alytus City Theatre in 2015, and troupe actor in 2015 to 2016



Theater training sometimes takes place at night as well

Lithuanian cultural policy. I believe that Alytus could and still can be a testing ground for developing such a structure and becoming a cultural centre of the region.

When I came to work as an artistic director, Alytus Theatre was at a multilateral crossroad. Both emotionally and structurally – as a team. Yes, that's just my opinion - the theatre needed a phase where everything – the administrative and creative structure - was lost without scruples.

Some of my ideas coincided with, or at least were similar to, the visions of the current theatre manager, Inesa Pilvelytė (many of them have already become a reality). My biggest problem was that I did not realise (I do not know whether I realise now or, more precisely, can justify it now) the bureaucratic slowness of state / municipal theatres. I'm hot-blooded and impulsive; I just want everything to happen here and now, all at once. Sometimes it was very good but I believe the realisation that it was better for me to be on stage rather than at it came in time. This is true of both structural and creative things.

I have to sincerely admit that I am VERY glad to see where the theatre is now. The high level of performances is starting to appear on the stage, where ones are being shown on tour and awarded. Both the municipality and the people of Alytus (due to their literacy) should pay attention to what creators come to Alytus and what projects are being carried out.

Albertas Vidžiūnas. Opening of ‘Dampers’

Saulė Pinkevičienė

For me, Alytus Theatre is important not only as an integral display of creative space and time, where I created five performances, but also in my personal relationships with the people who accompanied me and consequently, saw me differently. The performances I created were like a reflection of how I was living in at the time.

The constant longing of my parents, who emigrated to America, provoked me to speak on a topic that affected almost every Lithuanian family. Invited by the new director of the theatre, Inesa Pilvelytė, I immediately realised that after being in a drawer for a long time, my staging based on Upton Sinclair’s novel ‘Jungle’ was what was needed, not only for the then Alytus Theatre, but also for myself. This established a connection with the troupe, and the result encouraged further work.

A director needs to have not only a close, understanding, like-minded playwright, artist, composer and actor, but also a theatre director. The power of a young (and not only) creator is often revealed by giving him a consistent, not necessarily calm, but trust-based presence in the theatre. Such a connection was with Algirdas Latėnas, Antanas Venckus, Kęstutis Vaičiulis and also was found with Inesa Pilvelytė as well. It still connects us to this day.

I never set myself the task of revealing a particular actor, uniting, or educating the troupe. But even acting selfishly, demanding the best possible contribution to a performance from people, you still achieve it by accident. You achieve it because



Director Albertas Vidžiūnas has been collaborating with Alytus City Theatre since 2015, and has been theatre art director since 2016



“(Not) Children’s Games” (Eugenijus Rakauskas, Jonas Gaižauskas and Vincas Vaičiulis)

you are constantly communicating, seeing, reacting and, most importantly, cherishing your presence together. I put my all into a relationship and try to accept the different possibilities of each actor as a unique gift. What matters is how people work and the level of satisfaction they experience. In rehearsals, I often repeat: ‘Let’s cherish the time given to us to be together today.’ It doesn’t matter what we build (because all the stories are about the same thing - love) or what will happen next - maybe the premiere or maybe the lockout will start. The process itself is valuable; the psychological aspect, for me, first of all, is regarding human issues, because I know that everything else will come after that. And the audience will come and hopefully, it will grow. But if you don’t handle that *relationship* effectively, you won’t be able to work because you will close your ‘dampers’. In creation, you are like a conductor, passing every single aspect through yourself, namely, relationships, situations, or circumstances.

After a successful tour in America, where we showed the performance ‘American Dream’ in Milwaukee and Chicago, we felt like we already had a secret that only we knew, and that it would bind us together for a lifetime.

I have a friend, Herkus Kunčius, who told me about a shocking meeting with students of one Šiauliai school. He was shocked not by the meeting itself, not by the students, but by the knowledge that the two girls who had killed their girlfriend and dumped her body parts



„Jonas Sobieskis“
(Jonas Gaižauskas and
Vaidas Praspaliauskas)

in various places were from that particular school. Children's games, evolving into non-children's games, were our first theme for the triptych of performances. Of course, we haven't thought about any triptych yet. We deliberately held the premiere press conference in my childhood kindergarten, because our first childless games often started there.

My childish games were becoming increasingly challenging. As the symbolic premiere of the 'Arena of Freedom' approached, my involvement with alcohol became very tense and detrimental, as did the relations with both theatre people and relatives. The dynamic, grim, apocalyptic sentiment consumed the atmosphere of the play, filled with character perversions, it was demolished and erected again, as if deliberately to test the sustainability of what was created. I reached a limit beyond which I could no longer return. The premiere took place, but already without me. After the rehabilitation attempting to amend my relationships, as in a fairy tale, I went to work as a gizel with one of the best Lithuanian organ masters, Girėnas Poviliūnas. I served exactly for one year. I tuned up the local organ and restored the real organ of Kantaučiai, Pivašiūnai, and Telšiai cathedrals and this was where I formed the idea to finish the triptych someday. The third play was 'Jonas Sobieskis'. The beginning of a new season was approaching and the unfinished 'Arena of Freedom' did not bring; I immediately asked Inesa Pilvelytė to fix it and bring it to life and that's what happened. Gradually, confidence in me and my self-confidence returned.

For a short time, I also was the artistic director of Alytus Theatre, but most importantly, the change of those (artistic directors) at Alytus Theatre did not unbalance the troupe. And right now, I think they have a manager - Andra Kavaliauskaitė, who not only follows their pulse but also pulses together.

I am also pulsating again now and I am very happy that I managed to release the play 'Jonas Sobieskis'. The year's break was no issue because I had been carrying that material for a long time, and carrying to much of any kind of burden in life is dangerous. I wanted to analyse the topic of addiction through the idea of the grotesque. Sometimes it is difficult to separate the goals of life and creativity, because you are already breathing through your creations, but it is also your life. It was as if I had already decided not to return to the theatre, but life turned on the green light again. The Creator opened the 'dampers', and currently, in Alytus we are preparing the premiere, 'Jewish Street', together with the Lithuanian Jewish song and dance ensemble, 'Fajerleh'.



Searching for "Jonas Sobieskis"...

Arvydas Lebeliūnas. Stones from Babriškės fields

Saulė Pinkevičienė

Theatre can be born everywhere no matter the city, theatre can be created in an empty space. I am a sedentary person, I have been living in Kaunas all my life and from there I migrate to various Lithuanian cities with creative projects: Vilnius, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Naisiai, Alytus.

In around 1995, at the Kaunas Small Theatre, which I was leading at the time, we staged a performance, 'Photos from an Old Album', based on the music of the Alytus group, 'Ireland'. 'Ireland' surprised with meaningful texts, emotional sounds, the fact that it brought such a beautiful clean spiritual culture and... that such *monsters* could be born in Alytus! I remember we took the performance all over Lithuania, we also showed it at the Alytus Theatre, about which I had already heard a lot. At that time, only the small hall was finished, but we were struck by its conditions: the stage was cozy, the audience hall was amazing, and the sound and lighting equipment was new. I remember being taken to see the great hall, which was still a huge construction site and we thought: 'Wow! And why do they need such space?' It took some years, but that big hall was opened, really beautiful and tidy, The long construction time was not in vain. It's good that the dream of the actors who worked there at the time came true.

As far as I know, Alytus Theatre was directed by wonderful directors with a vision (I am not speaking about the building, but the theatre as such). And, of course, the Municipality of Alytus City made a great contribution here, looking at it with full respect for the



*Arvydas Lebeliūnas, director,
has been collaborating with
Alytus City Theatre since 2015*



"Goodbye, Mr. Lorence" (Jonas Gaižauskas, Andra Kavaliauskaitė)

theatrical culture and its perspective. It seems to me this is the greatest gift when a city takes care of its culture.

But as an artist, I'm not looking for a building - I connect theatre first and foremost with the people who work there, with the actors, they are important to me, I cling to them. The first performance at the Alytus Theatre was given impetus by my former student, Andra Kavaliauskaitė ('Come and stage something with us!'), who was already working at this theatre. I didn't have a specific idea, but after all, you carry a lot of plays with you all the time, looking for spaces and people to implement your ideas. I was offered to stage a play, 'Goodbye, Mr. Lorencai', based on a play by Morris Panych, so I was acquainted with the troupe, spaces and possibilities of Alytus Theatre for the first time.

In 100th year of Lithuania's independence, a new idea emerged. I don't even remember if there was any instruction from above to create a commemorative performance, but I wanted to share with everyone about the century of Lithuanian statehood during the history of one family. The playwright Mindaugas Valiukas liked the idea, so he found people, talked and drank with them while he listened to all the stories of the family, and I received the etudes from which the performance, 'Foundations from Mindaugas Castle', had to be created. Fake



“Goodbye, Mr. Lorence” (Vidas Vaškius, Andra Kavaliauskaitė, Inesa Pilvelytė)

Stone.’ The etudes still needed to be strung on a dramatic thread, and I didn’t have a core principle. The music created by the composer Jonas Sakalauskas, with whom we had many shared creative projects, and the idea fallen from the sky (I could not explain its origin in any other way) helped – the action of the performance must take place in the museum. This was because the museum is a house on the foundations of Mindaugas Castle and its visitors can feel the history.

I wanted the performance to be intimate, cinematic (in most cases, what I do is cinema; I graduated in film directing), it is very precious for me because of the great idea and the unique solution of the material. And I wanted to prepare actors for an intimate frankness, which is especially important in cinema, but also in theatre, where a lot depends on the actors. As the premiere approaches, you can see how they are increasingly focused and feel the responsibility to vocalise their thoughts – it is not the visual solution of the *mise-en-scène* that lasts only a few minutes, but it is this *preparation* of the actors that is probably the greatest directing. If an actor is *not prepared*, they begin to broadcast their ego, and the viewer is lost because he understands it very quickly: ‘It’s not about me.’ Most theatres have performances in their repertoire that live for ten years or more, as audiences come back to see if it’s really about them. This is where all the beauty lies, because the performance is not born during the

premiere, it needs to be shown even if the hall is not full. I am not the one who supports the accelerating pace of creation, the abundance of premieres that fizzle out and are no longer in the repertoire after six months.

I am very glad that the audience liked the performance, ‘Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone.’ Sometimes I feel like I’m stranded between a viewer and my idea when I do not want either to rise, or fall. So, instead of focusing on an individual, I direct my efforts on to that anonymous individual in the hall, a spectator I don’t know and who’s roughly in the middle. Basically, the viewer is your gift, he evaluates you; I don’t see the point in creation where I don’t feel personally connected to the viewer and their response to your performance. And ‘Foundations from Mindaugas Castle’ found that answer, because the performance talks about moral values, and the viewer begins to long for such topics. (Probably, this is the secret of the success of the performance, ‘Angels of Scrooge Street’, for children, but it is also very popular with adults.) Values are a connection to one another, and in our world, there is so much misunderstanding, causing generations to be torn apart, making elders feel odd in the modern world. When it comes to how important it is to remain human, it is relatable to both the old and the young viewer. What matters is that it is talked about on stage. So, in the history of each of our lives or relatives, we can find stones from the foundations that resonate with the roots, through the past of each of us; our history is alive.

I have roots in Dzūkija. When I was a child, I heard a picturesque story from Dzūkija, it was very emotional and attracting, like a mini-theatre. Theatrical Dzūkija people, as far as I had to meet them on stage, there are also invaluable. Let’s take the actor Sigitas Jakubauskas (I can’t imagine another Juozapas ‘In the Foundations of Mindaugas Castle’). I don’t understand *how* he does it on stage, where does that power come from? Probably from my life experience, sensitivity, attitude to the world, time. Sigitas’ mystery haunted me all the time because he does what the director asks, and so much more. So does the actress, Neringa Varhelytė. I also have worked with more actors from Dzūkija. We are *bound* by Dzūkija people’s character and roots, so close and so important.

If I ever had a paradise on earth, it was my childhood summer in Dzūkija, Babriškiai village. When I go to Alytus Theatre, sometimes I go earlier and stop to stay in those fields. I have brought a few stones from there.



"Kingdom" (Ramūnas Šimukauskas)



"Kingdom"

Andra Kavaliauskaitė.

Without the fear of making mistakes

Everything happened very unexpectedly; before sending my CV, I didn't even know that the city of Alytus had a professional theatre. At the time, they were looking for a creator, and I was looking for a space in which I could peacefully devise, whilst maintaining a tranquil outlook on life. I realised that it couldn't hurt to at least try and I was especially motivated because at that time (in 2015), Petras Lisauskas worked as an artistic director and created many theatrical pieces in the Alytus Theatre. I tried, and eventually that 'I don't know what it is' became 'I know and am in it', very close to being mine. My first steps were a mixture of too quiet and then sometimes excessively loud. I had to learn a lot to understand: 'Andra, this is not a theatre of your name!' This theatre has its own story, its own path, its own pains and joys, its own experiences. You must learn to hear a person. First of all, a person and only then, once they have been heard, everything else that goes with the theatre. And that's what I've been learning for five years now. Multi-layered, multicoloured, multifaceted years.

If we had to single out the strongest feature of our theatre, I would not hesitate to answer – it's freedom. For a creator, this is a great value. When I am asked if the performance 'Seen' could have been born in any space, I answer: 'Of course, but with one condition. If there is freedom in it.' This theatre gave it to me, and I will always be



Andra Kavaliauskaitė, actress of Alytus City Theater Troupe since 2015 and art director since 2019 up to now



"Different"

very grateful for that. And in saying that, I don't mean an unexpectedly weighted reward, I'm talking about experience. Of course, I don't deny, that March 29th was important and special, but probably no creator thinks about the success of the work, the Oscar, the Palm Branch, or the Golden Cross of the Stage. But... I've lied. We really think about one primary focus – the viewer, the conversation and the communication with them. When creating 'Seen', like the whole triptych of mono-performances, I listened to my heart and proceeded with my eyes closed. Not just the eyes, but the mind. Only by closing my eyes could I break away from what was created previously and create what I desperately wanted.

In addition to freedom, our theatre has another important feature in my eyes: there is no age, gender, achievement, or downfall on stage for us. We come naked to every performance. Yes, the nakedness comes with our experience and also the path taken by everyone, but here the young actor feels safe with the elder, and the elders are not 'put off' to the margins of the past. I am extremely happy that on stage, we are equal. And in every performance, we grow anew. Each individually, and all together at the. Awareness of that one stage can be great and the next... stop. No one knows where our growth will end, when the moment will come when we will want only to breath. And it's so charming. When I hear how sometimes there is a strong conflict between generations of actors in other theatres, my heart is calm: it's not about our theatre house. And if no one had asked me that, the thought would never have even crossed my mind.



"The best gift" (Written and directed by Andra Kavaliauskaitė)

I never focused on the number of spectators when creating the performances – that would be a horrible, professional betrayal. Put your efforts into creating something valuable and the viewers will come by themselves. We are dignified in this matter, and I really hope we will remain as such. We will expand the audience, maybe not so fast, but we will grow diligently and honestly creating, seeing not only ourselves, but also the theatre in the context of Lithuania and the world. By accepting the viewer, not as a ticket holder or number in an Excel spreadsheet, but as a partner and a respectable guest, we invite them onto our home.

For me, this theatre is not only in Alytus and Alytus counties. It is Lithuanian. My goal is to make our theatre accessible. In all meanings. Sometimes, in order for the viewer to come, you first have to go to it yourself. I really hope we could grow that special connection where people want to come back. Our path is not one-day, nor one-season. We are not creating to make fun where after a year we would no longer have anyone to show our performances to. We create in order to grow our audience and inspire them to be intelligent, curious, sensitive and receptive. The one who wants dialogue. Not necessarily loud and verbal. The main thing – real and not fake.

I have been working as an art director at Alytus Theatre for one year. I have only just managed to get to know everyone, to get a feel what I would like and what does not so much appeal to me. What I can give and what I can absolutely not. What I wish us and what I can do to make that wish a reality. The process has just begun. So far – just domestication, everything else is still waiting. Knowing that I am an actress and director, a number of people wonder



“Different“ (Andra Kavaliauskaitė)

if this might stop me from being an art director. And I think it’s just a plus, because I look at each actor more sensitively, consider every situation – from a more diverse perspective. Without being on stage, working with various creators, you will never know what the actors feel in certain situations and what the director who creates together with the actors feels. I received a huge gift of life – to be on both sides of the stage, and that experience allows me to look at everything in much more depth and be able to be much more empathetic. However, I still don’t know if I will succeed. Because here is no longer enough with only me. All of us are needed here. If there is faith and trust, if we do not rest on believing in our dreams and begin actually pursuing them, very big things can happen.

I want to wish improvement on the whole Alytus Theatre, to each of us individually and to all of us together. Looking ahead to the productions of the coming season, the directors who will come to create with our troupe, I feel sense of pride to ourselves. It’s hard to believe that this is really becoming a reality. Impressive productions and amazing creators are waiting. I am proud of where and how our theatre travels. I want the way forward to continue to be so deep-edged and bold. Let our experience and the works speak of us, sometimes in whispers and sometimes in silence or ‘thunder’.

I am convinced that great and important work can be done, not only in big cities and state theatres, but also in those where only a few people create. The most important thing is professionalism, dedication, respect, improvement and mutual support. The mistakes and ups and downs should be taken as lessons, rather than defeats. Creativity without fear of making mistakes. Courage to dream. Courage to be naked (metaphorically). The courage to walk where others have not before.



„Seen“

Inesa Pilvelytė. The Clock of our Theatre is Moving Faster

Saulė Pinkevičienė

The 30th anniversary of Alytus Theatre caps three decades of hope, faith and love. And that says it all. There has been disappointment, pain and anger. There has been sacrifice. But hope, faith and love were stronger.

I would like to believe that today we are on a hill and are climbing up – on the way to the top. Of course, our mountain is not surrounded by luscious green valleys, and at the beginning of the road it was a wasteland with just some oasis. But the climate of the planet is changing, just as the foothills of our mountain - after being watered, loosened, and maintained, have become fertile. Only mountains would not be mountains, they have both fast-rocky rivers and unexpected landslides. There is also a threat from above that has been reminding us of itself for all three decades - storms in the mountains can be so unpredictable.

I have known Alytus Theatre, you could say, since its establishment. My personal relationship with it is to love, to serve and, if necessary, to protect. No matter what position I am in - actress, director or project manager - I will do my best to keep our theatre alive and sound. I was born in the year of the dog and the dog has one owner and serves him faithfully. My owner is a theatre. Not a theatre director, not an artistic director, but a Melpomene.

I know a number of fellow actors who successfully lead theatres. When I see their names in performance apps, I sigh



Inesa Pilvelytė, Director of Alytus City Theater since 2015 up to now



"A streetcar named desire" (Vaidas Praspaliauskas, Ona Gudaitytė, Andra Kavaliauskaitė, Inesa Pilvelytė, Tomas Kunčinas, Suren Shahverdyan, Tomas Pukys)

every time because I know how insanely difficult it is to combine these activities together. It often makes me think about how much I miss the stage, the audience, the creative excitement. Director Inesa is very jealous of the actress Inesa! Because actress Inesa sits in a dressing room in front of a mirror, and she only cares about the role. She doesn't have a headache because of the project, the unfinished report, the lack of funding for the festival, or the broken pipeline. I probably would never have decided to be a theatre director if I hadn't seen opportunities in this position that I could pursue to help our theatre.

During the five years I ran Alytus City Theatre, many changes took place in it. Some were planned, others were dreamed of. I have a special gift because my dreams come true. No politician would compete (joking) because I implemented my creative programme as a director by 99 per cent. True, some of the ideas seemed too adventurous – you dream of good directors, quality productions, although you are well aware that there is a zero in the bill for the implementation of those ideas. We hardly get funding for the creative activities of the theatre; we have to source it ourselves. You hardly believe that an interesting director will come to the theatre with his expensive creative group, but you never know whether you will receive project funding from the Lithuanian Council for Culture or whether you will manage to persuade a private sponsor. If you didn't believe in what you were doing, you probably wouldn't have anything.

Arvydas Kinderis is a person who I call my teacher and the real founder and creator of Alytus theatre. There were various stages of theatre life, sometimes the creative source (or theatre management) roared in the swamp. We were angry, rebelling inside, but we did not raise the



“(Not) Children’s Games”

coup out of respect for Arvydas. It was a difficult period; we remember it with a sore heart even now some pains are still felt. Even more difficult was my own decision to apply for the position of theatre director. Political games about theatre had already begun, and they had not yet been stopped. Oh, if only creativity, theatre development, artistic and managerial issues related to theatre activities would remain!

It coincided that when I started running the theatre in 2015, it went through a crisis for a variety of reasons. We had to supplement the repertoire suddenly – we invited directors, actors, and rejuvenated the troupe. We overcame the crisis, but the stressful pace set remained. I know it’s not very easy to work at that level of intensity, to release six premieres a season, to hear the accusations of fellow actors or even some directors. But, dear, we live in the 21st century, all the clocks are working faster! It is common practice in the world for a performance to take five to six weeks to complete. Long analysis of the work, time to experiment, making mistakes, and corrections are luxuries which everyone wants. In reality, there are a lot of ideas and high workloads, which means a very high intensity of work. Unfortunately, there are almost no safeguards in the theatre, and even the best director doesn’t know if the new performance will succeed or will be attended much at all. The plank can be raised, but the art of theatre has so many components that you never know if all of it will ring at the right moment.

Every theatre dreams of its own Shakespeare! But not everyone can afford even a head of the literary section. I believe that someday it will be in our theatre and now I am glad that, during those five years, seven original stage works were created especially for Alytus theatre. I am especially pleased with my friendship with the playwright Herkus Kunčius, the chairman of the Republican Playwrights Competition Commission of Alytus City Theatre and one of the founders of the Theatre Support Foundation. Upon his as grotesque virtuoso’s plays, three socially relevant performances were staged in our theatre (all of them directed by Albertas Vidžiūnas). The first part of the trilogy ‘(Not) Children’s Games’ is, in my opinion, the best performance our theatre has ever delivered to the public. I am also very proud of the plays of our theatre’s art director Andra Kavaliauskaitė. The trilogy, the last part of which, the mono-performance ‘9/18’, has so far been seen only by the Art Council of the theatre, raises many painful modern-day issues of youth bullying, bodily cult, and self-unlove. Another original play, specially written for our theatre is Mindaugas Valiukas’ ‘Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone.’ The performance, created according to it and directed by Arvydas Lebeliūnas is one of the spectators’ favourites.

The theatre is first and foremost defined by its troupe, the actors. We were known for our very plastic and well-physically prepared troupe’s movement on the stage. Certainly not every theatre can boast of four performances dedicated to movement or dance. Today, the troupe of Alytus Theatre is not large, but we are versatile because we must constantly update the repertoire which is vital for the theatre. It is wonderful that more and more young people are deciding upon the Alytus Theatre play or directing stage for their creative quests.

But the theatre is not just about performances. Alytus Theatre wants to be vibrant, attractive to the audience, and this requires many paratheatrical educational activities, the format of



*"A streetcar named desire"
(with Tomu Kunčini)*



"Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone" (Vaidas Praspaliauskas, Eglė Juškaitė)

which is often difficult to define. It can be things such as meetings, author's evenings, discussions, performances, theatrical actions, or stage reconstructions. It is an ongoing active management process during which the viewer is encouraged to trust and discover various forms of performing arts that will meet their expectations. Those expectations are different for everyone, so it is safest when the theatre has something to offer to all of them from its wide repertoire.

Feedback from viewers, the urban community, is very important to me and I want it to be positive. In 2022, Alytus will become the Lithuanian Capital of Culture, and the Alytus Academy of Cultural Management, established at the Alytus Theatre, is preparing for this purposeful event. When we asked its members, what made them proud of Alytus, almost 80 percent mentioned our theatre. I would like the residents of our city, Dzūkija region, to answer in this way as well!

The 30th anniversary season was marked by a pandemic. It reminded everyone that God can find various ways to make fun of theatre plans, but at the same time forced it to mobilize in a creative way. To think about innovative theatrical products, to rethink the situation and possibilities of performative art. For some time, there was even a pessimistic mood.... Will people still care about art if death, illness and deprivation are nearby? During war and plague, it is certainly not the theatre that matters, but later, humanity always experiences a cultural upswing. I feel that in the long run we will not have lost the activity due to the pandemic.

A frequently asked question at the moment: 'How realistic is the aspiration of Alytus City Theatre and what are the possibilities of becoming a state theatre?' I cross my fingers. I know this is just a dream, but we are taking very real steps towards it.

One Day Festival In Kaunas

Audronė Girdzijauskaitė

This sounds unusual because we, who were notoriously bad at saving time, somehow ended up making our celebrations long, boring, and expensive. Drama Theatre Festival – as many days, as many performances. Guests walk around the city, exploring the surrounding area, and having had a nap after a hearty lunch, wait for an evening performance at the buffet. If it is not good, they begin to despair and potentially regret as they remember they left their left jobs and families for this. And the puppeteers, who had recently gathered in the Lithuanian Puppetry Association, decided to use the Western experience and in one day, show performances in which only one or two actors take part.

By the way, it is the puppet theatre of small magnitude that hold the future. In the long run, it will compete with those 'bloated' drowning state theatres because it will be small, mobile, adaptable to the environment, as well as open to influence, and communicative. I have seen many such small theatres at serious foreign festivals that have performed complex works and created subtle art. Notably, we watched a great performance by Dan Hans Rione at the Baltic Festival in Kaunas last autumn. During it, it was finally agreed to call professional theatres not only the two state theatres of Vilnius and Kaunas, but also all those which are really professional.

Twelve plays and a video about Steponas Giedrimas, old Samogitian puppeteer. There were traditional performances with decorations, music tracks and complex lighting for the

normal stage ('Dancing Princess' by director Algirdas Stankevičius from Kaunas, 'About Jonelis' by R. Driežis from Vilnius, and 'Emperor John the Heartless' by Arvydas Kinderis from Alytus (motif by Oskaras Milašius). The performance, 'Untitled', of the lyrical absurdity of the students of the Academy of Arts Vytautas Pakalnis and Irma Balakauskaitė (about love, loneliness, and freedom) was shown along with them



"Emperor John the Heartless" (Gintaras Gvazdaitis)

and at the end of it the decorations are burned. We also saw traveling 'Wagon Theatre' of Antanas Markuckis from Panevėžys which was hopelessly confined to the small stage of the theatre, after losing its natural environment and audience. Little Marija Janavičiūtė and her mother presented a modest home-made and decorated home theatre, which stands on a table (fairy tale 'Ožka ragožka'). There was also a performance, 'Pea Boy', by Martynas Mažvydas National Library, representing the 'applied' theatre and was welcomed by the children.

Even a few actors appeared with the doll on stage. Olita Dautartaitė from Šiauliai 'gossip' theatre, Nijolė Vaitkevičiūtė, who tried to play a philosophical etude with an abstract doll, Aurelija Čeredėjevaitė with a miniature 'Bird', guests from Leningrad and Panevėžys-based actor Vytautas Juškevičius also showed pop etudes, whose 'Buratino's Mischief' left the impression of poor-tasting staging decisions.

The biggest surprise of the festival was the first premiere of Alytus Theatre-Studio. It was a truly professional, witty, even refined interpretation of the fairy tale, in which director Arvydas Kinderis and artist painter Loreta Stirbytė, who debuted at the puppet theatre, and both actors – Rima Pilukaitė and Vilius Balsys – expressed themselves as unexpectedly charming – like French people. It was a strange, non-Lithuanian performance, meaning one could avoid the temptation to mourn or admire oneself, and, as Milašius' fairy tale, it was a bit cold and mystical. Everyone liked it except those who assume they know what a real puppet theatre should be like. I also liked the director's attitude to create a universal theatre rather than drama or puppet theatre using the experience of different types of theatre. Apparently, in Alytus, and not in Marijampolė's 'Bermuda Triangle', a real young theatre can appear and this is something that must be supported.

The festival was useful to the actors who have been able to show their abilities, critics who have had the opportunity to review stereotypical evaluation criteria, and state theatres which have seen their competitors. It is possible that this small celebration will have laid the foundations for international festivals in Lithuania.

Audronė Girdzijauskaitė

Atgimimas, 21–28 November 1990



"Emperor John the Heartless" (Rima Pilukaitė)

Vaidas Jauniškis.

Theatre House on the Land of Snow-Covered Refrigerators

In such a quiet and gloomy province, as Alytus so often appears on the evening of an everlasting winter, the existence of a theatre is, in itself, a routine challenge. It intervenes in the stretch of work and home not only by its presence, but it also arrogantly threatens to stand across the road with a new modern building. Theatre under the municipality in the literal and figurative sense.

What do you say, the parents of the city think, albeit after a long time, but after building a spectacular theatre with a small stage and not denying to ever open the big one? How many people and for how long will the 169-seat hall, not mentioning the 18 spaces on the balcony, be in use for? On the other hand, over 40 spectators came to 'Freken Julia', which was performed for the 16th time.

So how does the city of 70,000 inhabitants differ from Vilnius speaking about the attendance of some performances?

The theatre-studio, which has been managed by Arvydas Kinderis for six years, occasionally awakens the city's society – not only with children's performances, which have enough viewers, but also with promotions at the theatre columns that have not been built in the summer – and therefore are almost Greek (short version of Justinas Marcinkevičius' 'Cathedral'). Children have 'Mikė and Others', teenagers – 'Young Sailor and Pirates', and adults – 'Taste of Honey' by Sheila Delaney, a newly staged 'Sugar of Remembrance' according to a couple of short stories by Saulius Šaltenis. The repertoire needs to be changed often – how many spectators will you obtain from Alytus and its surroundings?



And the city theatre works as a commercial non-repertoire, because there are 5 actors and 3 directors.

The actors are not professionals, they are students from the same studio, created by A. Kinderis. One thing is clear to them: they stand in the open field with the traditions of refrigerators and champagne factories and with Marijampolė, which holds the aura of the former theatre purely out of inertia, you cannot even compare them yet. Moreover, G. Nasutavičius' studio, 'Provincija', did not remain, and these actors became unilateral and lonely monopolists without competitors.



„Freken Julija“ (Aurelija Vaivadaitė, Jonas Gaižauskas)

Of course, it is always possible to comfort yourself that J. Miltonis grew Panevėžys on empty soil, but A. Kinderis understands that he is not Miltonis. But, he is staging A. Strindberg - so far as a teaching tool for both the spectator's and actor's practice.

The small stage is suitable for seeing everything: mahogany furniture and authentic copper dishes that paint a brilliant scene of a Scandinavian household (scenographer – Arvydas Norvaiša). Even the slightest hint of a secret thought, will be discovered; everything is heard and noticed. But the actors of this 'Freken Julia' do not trust the audience yet and do not yet know the subtleties. The downside of amateurism truly comes out when one turns to the parterre with a desire expressed in full force and with a task flowing over the words. Jonas Gaižauskas' Jean is only a smurd who physically and mentally copes with Ms. Julia. In the name of changing the status in society, or maybe because he fell in love - there remains a question to be answered.

Inesa Šematulskienė's Julia provokes, sometimes more subtly, sometimes quite openly, but in the second style, the lady falls deeper and deeper into the position of a servant. Only the maid Kristina, created by director Dalia Kimantaitė, starts in the second act, handling something like kitchen utensils - in no hurry, knowing her nature and status, the arrangement of the world and the Gospel. Her calm presence puts everything in place, and the re-lentled Jonas Gaižauskas, having shortly talked to her, immediately discovers an ironic view to Jean and her own situation.

Now the scene of Alytus city is like halfway: a lot has been walked and you need to travel without rest – to discover your purpose and your expression. Isn't it high time to taste the 'Sugar of Remembrance'?

Rasa Vasinauskaitė: Beatrice's Story Today

No matter what anyone thinks, or whoever would be indifferent while evaluating Alytus City Theatre, it lives and, in spite of everything, stages performances and participates in festivals. It strives to be, to survive, and to prove to others that it is not only a cultural institution, but also a creative theatre troupe. Of course, it hurts the people working there when they feel excluded from the general life of our theatre – Alytus takes part in events and tour on their own initiative, although their desire to perform and not be forgotten often can create doubts with fellow professionals. There are doubts because the theatre exists outside a certain range of evaluations – it is led by professionals, non-professionals act in performances, the theatre is supported by Alytus City Municipality, but it is non-state. The performances balance between professionalism and amateurism, and their evaluators are more inclined to solve the problem in the simplest and easiest way – not to apply the criteria, typical of professional theatres, and, when calling it amateurish, to turn a blind eye to the growing prominence of creativity and professionalism.

Last year, Alytus City Theatre participated in a competition for productions of Lithuanian authors. The theatre could not compete with the professionals of that time, because S. Šaltenis' 'Sugar of Remembrance', directed by D. Kimantaitė and created on the basis of several short stories, really looked amateurish and untimely. However, The director did not give up, and already Juozas Grušas' 'Love, Jazz and the Devil', which seemed to be outdated and hardly needed at all today, was shown in March on the Theatre Day occasion.

The performance lives on. It is constantly changing, continuously evolving. Non-professional actors are characterised by the fact that, unlike professionals, they live the situation of a play or performance in a slightly different way each time. You would not call them masters of the subtleties of the profession. But, one could argue that spontaneity, organics, dedication, infectivity – all this makes the performance alive and interesting – unpredictable. Of course, there are also a few problems – lack of craftsmanship, lack of internal concentration



"Beatrice, run" (Žydrius Žitkauskas, Robertas Šarknickas, Inesa Pilvelytė, Audingas Aleknavičius)

to achieve the director's dictated goal, inability to control emotions can push the actor into external acting, imitation or comedy, emphasized expressiveness, which makes the performance a bit blatant and ensemble incoherent...

D. Kimantaitė invited quite young people to play. J. Grušas' situation which was simplified slightly and made it close to both the playing and watching teenagers. Surprisingly, the performance found its viewers, and recognisable everyday situations became easily perceived and provoked a particular spontaneous reaction of the audience. 'Love, Jazz and the Devil', called 'Beatrice, Run', isn't just acted. It is also danced. It is lived. Here is rock music, Bach, cognac, fun and fighting, first disappointments in love, longing for mother's tenderness, lack of communication with parents and teachers, betrayal, grief and forgiveness. This performance is more than just an illustrative reading of the play: young people are trying to talk about themselves with the same ideas of who they are and in the same language (perhaps street, basement or jargon) and be on stage as they or their peers are in life.

Yes, they are aggressive; they are not satisfied with the elders because they do not understand them yet. Teenagers want to be free and independent of the rules and prohibitions imposed by the older generations, they want to drink and drink a lot, look like heroes, fight and make love. But they are looking – not only for their place in life, but they are also seeking



"Beatrice, run" (Marius Sadauskas, Audingas Aleknavičius, Erika Jasinskaitė, Tomas Kunčinas)

after themselves. They are wronged and are punished for it. Beatrice's love and death are a lesson for frivolity, giving birth to an eternal sense of guilt. You will have to pay a lot for a stupid and careless move.

All three young people - R. Šarknickas' Andrius, A. Aleknavičius' Julius and Ž. Žitkauskas' Lukas are different. Not only their appearance differs, but also their worldview, literacy and sensitivity to the environment. Andrius is the most aggressive; he is the leader of the 'boiler' friends. His constant desire to prove his autonomy and courage forces him to catalyse the initiation of dangerous situations from which he would hope to come out of as a winner. Julius, a philosopher, is in the 'boiler' because he can't be at home with his father, who has become crazy from his studies, and also Zina, the mother of Julius' child. Julius feels sick of home, father, Zina, and life on the street with friends becomes a theatrical expression of the struggle against banality and primitiveness. Lukas is here - out of loneliness and despair, the company of friends helps to forget the orphanage, with alcohol and music - demonstrating the emptiness of the soul. Next to them, Beatrice is the ideal version of both a friend and a woman.

The fact that she is nearby, provokes the feats of young people, pushes her into despair, and makes her think. Beatrice is in love with Andrius, which increases his authority among friends, but also spurs their jealousy. Andrius is happy with what he has. Beatrice is just one of many for him, and he treats her the way he would treat other 'whores'. The understanding of her pain and his conscience will wake up only after Beatrice is lost from him. Julius and Luke are attracted by Beatrice as something inexplicable, pure and beautiful. As a salvation. Being alone with her, the young people feel themselves, their past and present lives lose their meaning. Everyone seeks a girl in their own way, and, by being rejected by her, they feel that they have lost something very important... I. Šematulskienė's Beatrice is from here, out of their world, she is not inexplicable or strange, unless inviolable and forgiving. Beatrice forgives and empathises with everyone. By loving Andrius, she manages to remain independent because her inner world and experiences are inaccessible to everyone. Andrius mocks her painfully because of her love - he gives Beatrice's diary to her teacher, who, by humiliating her, makes her read the shameful verses aloud. Beatrice slaps the teacher, who puts her in a madhouse. But even after returning from there, Beatrice forgives Andrius...

The director gradually reveals the characteristics of the main characters elegantly without forcing it out. Young people change as the action rolls, due to the predominance of more positive character traits, their sympathy, and there comes a desire to empathize with them. The most consistent is Lukas' line - Lukas does not seem to exist until the middle of the second part of the performance. He listens to Andrius' bullying, which hurts him painfully, but does not dare to fight him, he is more inclined to reconcile than to leave the 'boiler' out of resentment. Lukas is perhaps the most dramatic character in this male trio. He is nobody, an orphan, knows neither his mother nor father, and was raised by a drunkard who Lukas described as a rich uncle. Beatrice is closest and most important to Lukas, he can tell only her what he has never told anyone...

R. Šarknickas' Andrius looks extremely energetic. He just uses all his energy to fight his friends, his father, and later Beatrice. Andrius protests. His protest - getting drunk, intoxicated, arguing with his friends, defeating Beatrice - seems a bit childish and empty, unconscious and frivolous. Andrius, unlike Julius or Lukas, is more immature, his behaviour is spontaneous and unwise. Unfortunately, Andrius does not know who he is fighting with and for, nor what he is trying to prove to his father. With his father, as with Beatrice, he behaves



Poster of the performance



"Beatrice, run"



"Beatrice, run" (Robertas Šarknickas, Inesa Pilvelytė)

rashly and in a distasteful manner. Being intoxicated with alcohol and offended that Beatrice is able to be better and forgive his betrayal, are casual factors for her rape. Only Lukas tries to warn the girl, but it is no longer possible to stop Andrius' rage. Beatrice runs outside, and Julius, who is running after her, returns from the staircase in shock (the action takes place in one of the rooms of the apartment building under construction). A girl jumps out the window to escape the attackers...

The performance does not lack superficiality, young inexperienced actors often fall into oblivion, and the scenes interestingly created by the director are long. It is easier for young people to perform fights, drunkenness, fun or attacks on their protesting parents than to justify their chosen existence. But they do what is closer to them, what they understand better, and what they are facing. Young actors do not tend to go beyond the limits of their experience which is interesting to their spectators. Alytus city theatre needs their audience, like fish needs water. 'Beatrice, Run' is for them but not only for them.

Vasinauskaitė Rasa. Beatrice's story today: [about Alytus City Theatre performance 'Beatrice, Run'] // 7 meno dienos. - 1997, May 30, p. 6-7.

Ridas Viskauskas: Alytus wants to create a professional theatre

For 10 years now, theatre has been operating in Alytus, thanks to the stubbornness of several theatre professionals. Starting almost from scratch, theatre fanatics, with the support of the city municipalities, assembled a troupe of actors, created a repertoire, attracted the attention of cautious spectators and even persuaded the Ministry of Education to design an actor course for young people from Alytus at the Lithuanian Academy of Music. Here we discuss the first steps, the present situation and perspectives of the theatre with Arvydas Kinderis, the artistic director of Alytus City Theatre.

– How did the initial idea of founding a theatre come about?

– In 1989, Dalia Kimantaitė and I graduated in directing in Moscow (lecturers Galina Kalashnikova and Piotr Popov). The then government of Alytus seriously intended to establish a theatre. We were selected to fulfil this idea. Construction of the theatre building began; 10 positions were allocated. We started looking for artists. There were no people who graduated from theatre studies in Alytus available. We understood that the conditions for inviting actors from Vilnius were unfavourable and so, we decided to educate the actors ourselves. In 1990, director Loreta Liausaitė, who returned from her studies in Moscow, joined us. Initially, we worked in the basement of the artist, Loreta Skruibienė. We staged the first puppet performance, O. Milašius's 'Emperor John the Heartless', which theatrologist, Audronė Girzijauskaitė evaluated as quite satisfactory. That's how we lived for the whole 10 years: we trained actors and staged performances. This is not a very good process. But there was no other way for us to survive, because the funds from the self-government are only enough] for modest salaries, and we have to earn money ourselves by staging performances. In difficult conditions, I had to stage performances, look for sponsors, work with the media... I did everything. And a person can do only one job well...

– During the 10 years, your repertoire included dance and puppet performances... Doesn't such versatility mean that the theatre was distracted while looking for its place under the sun?



Alytus Theater atreet action

– It was inevitable, after all, we started working without actors. By staging puppet performances, we seemed to partially compensate for the lack of drama actors. Dance performances were needed for young people to start moving and feel what the space was. Due to the reasons that I do not yet fully understand, the dance performances, 'Dances in the Moonlight', 'In the Carousel of the Station' (directed by D. Kimantaitė, choreographed by Natalija Fiodorova) did not catch on in Alytus. In addition, we have organised artistic campaigns in the non-theatre premises, such as Alfred Jarry's 'King Ubu' and Friedrich Durrenmatt 'National Hero'. The 'Cathedral' campaign (according to Justinas Marcinkevičius) caused a resonated greatly² in the city, with the aim of drawing the attention of the authorities and the public to the abandoned theatre building, the construction of which had been interrupted due to financing problems.

– What stimulated your activity?

– The desire to live in a modern theatre – as it seemed to us at the time – gave us creative quests. 10 years is a long time and we, the directors, are changing, and the troupe is changing together with us. In 1996, the regulations and name of the theatre changed (we were Alytus City Theatre-Studio). In the same year, for the fourth time, we moved to new premises in the city centre, this time in the City Hall Square.

– How did you feel when you returned to Alytus after graduating from Moscow?

– It's hard to say... Until 1989, no one formed a more serious theatre environment in Alytus. The mentality of the city is quite proletarian. 98% of population are workers. People in the province are careful, they will explore who you are, what you do, how, and why. Being a little different in the province is not easy. We paid a lot of attention to educational work with



„Cilindras“ (Aurelija Vaivadaitė, Robertas Šarknickas)

the troupe, most of which had only graduated from secondary school. We invited lecturers from various Lithuanian higher education institutions to read philosophy, history of religion, ancient literature, theatre history, costume history and other lectures to the troupe. When we visited the Tretyakov Gallery for the first time with the troupe in Moscow, the eyes of the young people were shining. They had never seen such things...

– However, the situation did not satisfy you, and this year the so-called Alytus City Theatre actor's course was held at the Lithuanian Academy of Music...

– When working with non-professional actors, it is very difficult to achieve the desired quality of the performance. Our goal is to create a professional theatre in Alytus. A few years ago, we asked the then Minister of Culture, Saulius Šaltenis, to support our idea. We were asked to train the actors at the expense of the municipality. Unfortunately, the municipality did not have the funds. This year, having convinced the Ministry of Education of the expediency of the idea, we have received 12 state-funded places at the Academy of Music where the course leader is Dalia Kimantaitė.

– Will there be no conflicts in the theatre in the future? After all, graduates will take bread from people who are currently working...

– 13 young people are studying at the Academy of Music. 4 of them are already working in the theatre (Onutė Gutaitytė, Inesa Pilvelytė, Aurelija Vaivadaitė, and Robertas Šarknickas). I hope that in the future the municipality will allocate some 5 more posts to the theatre. Competition in the theatre is a good thing. I would say we even suffered until it came.

– Do you perform a lot?

– We perform most intensively in October to December and February to March. In autumn and spring, due to land works, spectators in the province visit the theatre less frequently. We perform about 10 performances a month.

– The latest performance of Alytus Theatre is Anton Chekhov's, 'The Seagull'. What impresses you, the director of the performance, in Chekhov's dramaturgy?

– The main characters of the play (Nina, Treplev) are young, creative people who want to break out of the province, and try to change the world according to their beliefs and current world understanding, whilst looking for the meaning of life. It is also similar to the situation of our theatre.

– What kind of spectators does Alytus Theatre target? What are the upcoming premieres this season?

– There are quite few spectators in the province, and so in the big hall, where there are 600 seats, it is not expedient to stage performances. Our main spectators are young people and schoolchildren. Older people's interest in theatre is more occasional. We cooperate with city and district schools - we organize celebrations for children and training in theatre classes.

This season we will invite the audience to Eduardo de Filippo's play 'Cylinder' (director D. Kimantaitė), H. K. Andersen's fairy tale 'Nightingale' (director L. Liausaitė) premieres.

Ervinas Koršunovas. (Non)-childish manifesto of Albert Vidžiūnas

Last year, I got a job at Alytus City Theatre, when Albertas Vidžiūnas was still the artistic director here. Of his few ideas, this season only one, but still such a great one, was realised! On May 18, the main stage of ACT showed '(Not) Children's Games', directed by him, which brought back a long hard work on project work and trips from Vilnius to Dzūkija's capital and back. The premieres that have taken place are buying back a lot, especially in the province. Nonetheless they are happening in a theatre where organisational traumas are still alive, where a theatre troupe has been severely divided due to political interests. There are none of the main founders left, although some Kinderis', Kimantaitė's, and the passed away Liausaitė's performances are shown. However, their child, the Theatre, has survived and is manifesting itself. The theatre itself has already moved into the 2nd quarter of its life (season 27) and ends the season with a serious performance, not a childish one at all.

Herkus Kunčius' play is characterised by lively dialogues, an almost schematic set of characters, and ingenious passages of linguistic reconstructions (e.g. crossword or prayer scenes). In general, Herkus does not hide - both everyday language and apocalyptic prophecies in his dramaturgy are marked by the sign of extinction.



Ervinas Koršunovas



"(Not) Children's Games" (Eugenijus Rakauskas)

A. Vidžiūnas himself came up with the idea of the work and suggested it to the playwright Herkus Kunčius. He remarked that he even had a hilarious explanation of Herkus for a particular director, so that Albertas would understand the essence of one character in this and not in a different way. By the means of the dead character, in this way, the playwright seems to flirt with the semiotic idea of the author's death. Indeed, the play was written upon the theatre's request at the beginning of the season, and only after the Lithuanian Council for Culture approved the financing of the project did the theatre take on such a risky project at first sight.

The play is quite a dark, social drama, grotesque in nature... The creators are ambitious who have a drink already at the dinner table... Alytus spectators seem more inclined to the classical standard, otherwise they 'vote' with their feet... and the estimate exceeds the planned resources as well. So, as you can see, there are many reasons to experience stress, all the more so when the work seems to be aimed to directly target young people. Will they understand, will it be relevant to them? Or maybe it just needs 'sharp' material and open drama. This open question rather inspired the administration and the director of the theatre, Inesa Pilvelytė – let it be as it should be!



“(Not) Children’s Games“ (set designer Artūras Šimonis)

And it happened! The determination paid off, and a great performance, such *Gesamtkunstwerk*, was born in Alytus. Opera-scale, visually clean, genre-flawless, and most importantly – interesting from an actor’s point of view. The director, both during rehearsals and after the premiere, especially praised the language of the play, which allows the actors to speak naturally and create a natural stage relationship. There are a lot scenes in the play that you enjoy just because of its verbalism.

Herkus Kunčius’ play is characterised by lively dialogues, an almost schematic set of characters, and ingenious passages of linguistic reconstructions (e.g. crossword or prayer scenes). In general, Herkus does not hide - both everyday language and apocalyptic prophecies in his dramaturgy are marked by the sign of extinction. Language employment means the end of everything, a closed genealogical project. This is the main theme of both the play and the performance - humanity ends with the loss of language. In this sense, Herkus

is a really Lithuanian author, and at the same time universal, even Kabbalistic. The word here does not become flesh, nor does it become a saviour, it is not even a word. Some kind of emptiness, and the director has to somehow show it...

The main investment seems to have been in the actors and their clothes. A. Šimonis created such eloquent costumes that they immediately ascend people from the household level to the level of universal meaning. They lie between the biblical style of the poor and the current hipsters who dress up in such a way that even they look nice.

I admit, if not for the enthusiasm of Albert Vidžiūnas, I would not really believe in success either. Albertas almost fanatically believed in both this play and the members of his team: set designer Artūras Šimonis, composer Antanas Jasenka, video artists Alius Mikėlionis and Agnė Marcinkevičiūtė. I don’t know all the reasons behind choosing completely poor scenography: several movable screens, rare shadow theatre inserts, black-and-white film shots with a cat and a cross (slow motion), and a military video game (accelerated motion), five black cots, one mummy and a partially mummified team of actors.

The main investment seems to have been in the actors and their clothes. A. Šimonis created such eloquent costumes that they immediately ascend people from the household level to the level of universal meaning. They lie between the biblical style of the poor and the current hipsters who dress up in such a way that even they look nice. A. Šimonis’ clothes and make-up raise actors up as well.

Everyone works very harmoniously in the production, everyone is ‘tense’ (maybe children sometimes cause too much), especially a couple of actors who are a dog-family member, Jack (Eugenijus Rakauskas and Vincas Vaičiulis). The impression is that if the performance passed by, they would still handle it with their charming improvisations. They are like a Bulgakov’s suite of master Voland, moved not from literary but theatrical contexts. But the performance does not pass by (on the day of the premiere), it is only occasionally directed by Jack – the actors, Jonas Gaižauskas and Egle Juškaitė, who perform the roles of husband-father and wife-mother, have the largest tasks on the stage. This is one of the strongest duos that Alytus City Theatre could offer. Both actors have to do their best to create a surreal clownado, binary family stamps and their deconstruction.

E. Juškaitė’s woman embodies just the appalling furia-frustration that we can imagine from our mothers’ or even our own generations. E. Juškaitė seems to dispel all the myths created by the false women’s magazine industry from *Cosmopolitan* to *Ikona* which have been propagated for decades.

J. Gaižauskas seems a bit more versatile, resembling something from the classics of French film comedy (Pierre Richard?) or the Russian series, ‘Mesing’. Alytus’ Richard-Mesing also tries to depict a prophet, a judge (from the Book of Judges?), a clairvoyant, but he encounters E. Juškaitė, a woman who is extremely down to earth and sees through all the

dirty tricks. She holds all four corners of the house that are not visible on stage; she feeds an old mother who is just a jackstraw; she urges her to pray at a table that is not set for any meals.

Her materialism does not seem justified, and this creates the necessary intrigue for action (opposition to the man) and analysis (under the thunder, what kind of social realism is here?!). It is not for nothing that she constantly talks about the symbolist Čiurlionis or the pederast Pilsudski, because she does not find a real down to earth happiness anywhere (unless in allusions to the zoophilic love for little Jack).

E. Juškaitė's woman embodies just the appalling furia-frustration that we can imagine from our mothers' or our own generations. E. Juškaitė seems to dispel all the myths created by the false women's magazine industry from *Cosmopolitan* to *Ikona* for decades. All this is not worth a single penny - the current (non)-Soviet woman is tired and angry, ugly and shameless, greedy and lustful. None of Eve's daughter's flaws are inorganic to her - such is an accentuated point of view of this character, although it is achieved as if by modest means of acting. A great and painful portrait that could be called the role of a decade.

Finally, Lithuanian theatre created something real about a woman and her situation, without embellishments and masks. The stage where dogs depilate her legs is well worth the heights - this act of demystification and demythologization is also an important turn of Lithuanian theatre from the historical idea of romanticism to modernism. Of course, we are in it, we have seen Oskar Koršunovas' 'Old Woman' or Artūras Areima's 'Antichrist', who are freed from the romantic taboo on what Friedrich Nietzsche mockingly called *prudencia*.

However, there is still unfortunately a lack of recognition of women in Lithuanian theatre. It must be admitted that the sad-faced knight, A. Vidžiūnas, has done it: we did not have such a sensitive prick directly into the hearts (secrets) of the Lithuanian theatre myth. Perhaps this is what will be the least childish in this performance. By the way, this phenomenon occurs in a way of mutual contrast: J. Gaižauskas' husband is basically something non-paternalistic and childish from the beginning to the end. Only childish, not in a pejorative sense, but existential - a person without a place, without God, not even able to pronounce the word 'alleluia' correctly.

This performance approaches the topic of sacrifice, the greatest opposite to childlike, only here the will of H. Kunčius and A. Vildžiūnas is not a maturity, but rather a crime.

However, the charisma of J. Gaižauskas (by the way, the best joke related to it, which he does not want to give in advance) does not make him ham-fisted out of the character, even if his political career is not very repulsive. This is not the most important thing - the most important thing is that J. Gaižauskas was able to create the perfect role of a man buffoon, i. e. the way every woman dreams of imposing on her husband and then ends up regretting if she succeeds.

Indeed, there is still a real child, a girl, Daughter (actor Eglė Kordiukovaitė). She already lives in a demythologised cosmopolitan world, immersing herself in the icons of the virtual



“(Not) Children’s Games”



"(Not) Children's Games"
(Jonas Gaižauskas, Eglė Juškaitė)



“(Not) Children’s Games”
(Eglė Kordiukovaitė, Vincas Vaičiulis)

world, but sweeping any words without meaning, without realising that a five-letter word means an intangible thing (the answer is very simple - ‘Word’).

Little Eglutė has to embody the banality she falls victim to in the home of quarrelling parents. We see how such insensitivity, automatism, and finally sadism is reached: in the end, the friends brutally kill their enemy (H. Kunčius uses the motive of execution of one of the teenagers of Šiauliai gymnasium). The sacred human body is divided and eaten as through the Eucharist. Here, the creators of the play get closer to the basic myth of the scapegoat, which was mostly explored by René Gerard in his time, and then by many other scientists and artists. This performance approaches the topic of sacrifice, the greatest opposition to something childlike, only here the will of H. Kunčius and A. Vildžiūnas is not a maturity, but rather a crime.

Crime, which is also redemption, which is the essence of religion... Something is essential for everyone and no one, because there are such terrible truths that no one wants to hear: no family, no tribe, no nation, no civilization. Both spectators and theatrical artists. Sometimes only tragedians touch on this nuclear theme and do so in post-dramatic times. H. Kunčius’ euphemism hides a terrible reality, and A. Vidžiūnas staged it as a tragicomedy. The Lord would say: because of the hardness of your hearts.

The music in this performance is not tragicomic. On the one hand, it performs specific functions: ties and unties many semantic nodes, fully copies the narrative, gives actors intonations, and so on. We may not have such a smooth performance without Antanas Jasenka’s voiceover, but that is not the most important thing. I have a suspicion that the music performs here as a separate actor, as a Judge - A. Jasenka does not doubt a man, a woman, a man, God. It seems that he was not only creating this oratorio for the play, not just for the heroes of the game, not just for us listeners. There were a few moments that sounded like a Requiem. The Divine Requiem for our century, our generation, the greatness of our fall. And this is very biblical, where the divine Tremendum manifests itself not so much visually, but acoustically.

P. S. During the premiere, Antanas lost his glasses, it was no coincidence as the Child stays on the stage with sunglasses, which he wears both when killing his parents, singing to a child-board, and bowing to the spectators: such are the mourning cemeteries of the city, and we are all in them like in Mass...

2017-05-30, Bernardinai.lt



“(Not) Children’s Games”. Poster of the performance

From (non)-critic Oganes Arakelian's Facebook...

In my opinion, it is the best performance of Alytus Theatre. I was already impressed with '(Not) Children's Games', but this one... is a MASTERPIECE! It must be shown, shown and taken around Lithuania, and then shown again and again! The play itself, the director's and actors' work are worth a real reverence. I had a smile plastered to my face throughout the whole performance and yet, it isn't hard to say why. I am not an objective viewer because I am a representative of one of the biggest 'drinking places' in the city and thus, the issue of alcoholism is really familiar and close to me. In some places, I even forgot to breathe out of admiration. Those sudden twists and turns of the play and its unusual symbolism that seemed to fill every moment, from sounds to changing images – I just missed the places of alcohol smell in some places. Well, seriously, when you grow up in a society where alcohol is widely regarded as one of the most important places in an individual's development ('Why aren't you drinking? Drink because otherwise you look sick!'), when the drops of the devil are inseparable even from the sacred rites of a recognized religion (the blood of Christ), and when Homo sapiens cannot imagine life without flooding the boundaries of a sheep-like society. And also, only so to be able to put on at least a tiny masquerade of a free man, when the representatives of authorities pretend to be saints after becoming somewhat sober and, instead of raising awareness, they instead engage in sweetening of a forbidden fruit, so all that remains is to watch the comedy full of irony and laugh like a donkey. And not even at the actors, but at yourself and the surrounding environment. And what about the mocked relationship amongst husband, wife, 'friends' and society?

I could continue writing but... let's not aggrandize ourselves.

THANK YOU to the theatre staff for a wonderful evening and for raising some really sensitive issues.

It was the word of 'God'.



„Jonas Sobieskis“ (director Albertas Vidžiūnas)

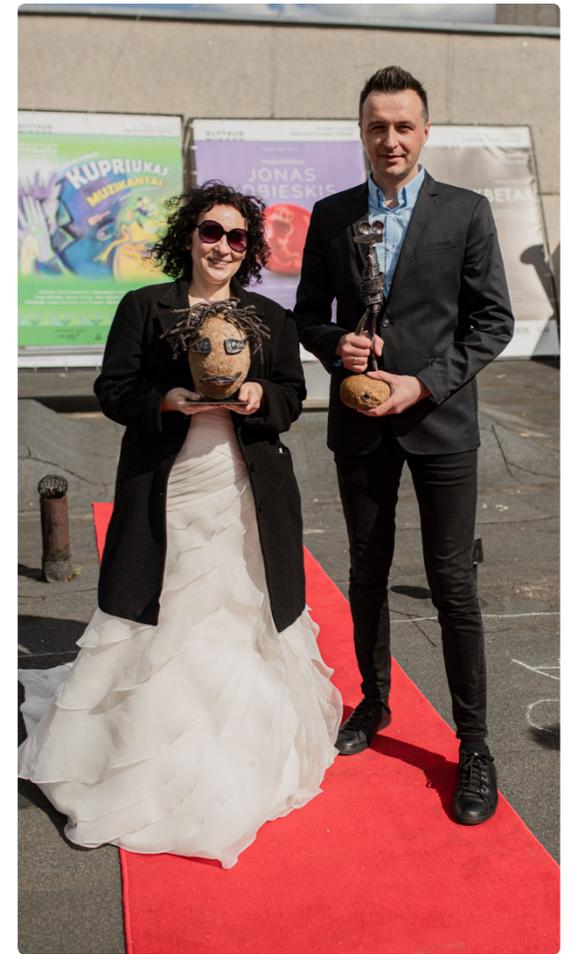
'Theatre Stones'. Alytus Theatre Awards

In 2020, 'Theatre Stones' was awarded to Vida Grišmanauskienė, Deputy Director for Theatre Development and Marketing - for excellent organisation of the theatre marketing division, publicity of various theatre activities, mentoring of young colleagues and creative involvement in all theatre activities. It was also awarded to Alius Mikelionis - for high artistic visualisations in performances and theatre events, as well as professionally created visual theatre publications.

Every year 'Theatre Stones' are created by a different artist so they vary from year to year. In 2020, the awards were created by blacksmith, Andrius Liaukus, and his assistant Tomas Stravinskas.

In 2019, the winners of 'Theatre Stones' were actor Vaidas Praspaliauskas and theatre accountant Dalė Levulienė, The awards were created by the sculptor, Matas Janušonis.

In 2018, the awards designed by Mindaugas Jakučionis were awarded to actress Eglė Juškaitė and Deputy Director Tomas Kunčinas, and a special award went to the theatre director Inesa.



Winners Vida Grišmanauskienė and Alius Mikelionis



In 2017, the awards made by the sculptor Audrius Janušonis went to Andra Kavaliauskaitė, director and the head of the actor troupe, and Laura Našlėnaitė, the then deputy director of the theatre.

In 2016, the awards were created by the sculptor Mantas Kazakevičius, and were dedicated to the actor and director Jonas Gaižauskas and lighting technician Vytautas Skruibis.

From 'Sugar of Remembrance' to the Golden Cross of the Stage...

Evaluations of Alytus City Theater

- 1996 Alytus City Culture Award – awarded to the director, Dalia Kimantaitė, for the performance, 'Sugar of Remembrance', by Saulius Šaltenis
- 1998 Inesa Pilvelytė was awarded with the 3rd place in the nomination for the best actress of the Lithuanian Professional Theatre National Drama Festival and won a prize for the role of Beatrice in Juozas Grušas', 'Beatrice, Run'
- 2004 Alytus City Culture Prize was given to director, Dalia Kimantaitė
- 2004 Alytus City Culture Prize was given to director, Arvydas Kinderis
- 2006 Druskininkai Theatre Festival Third Prize Award was given to Tomas Kunčinas for his role as Robis in the performance, 'Heroin' by Melvin Burgess (Director Dalia Kimantaitė)
- 2014 The winner of the Lithuanian Professional Theatre Festival, 'Long Live the Comedy', and nomination, 'Discovery of the Festival', was given to director Inesa Pilvelytė, performance, 'No Address. Untitled', by Jurgis Kunčinas
- 2015 Alytus City Culture Award for the performance, 'No address. No name' by Jurgis Kunčinas for a creative group (director Inesa Pilvelytė)
- 2019 Alytus Theater was awarded with the City Year Award, 'For Merits in Culture'



- 2019 Golden Cross of the Stage – premium and commemorative symbol of the Works of Professional Theatre Artists by the Ministry of Culture – Director Andra Kavaliauskaitė for Alytus City Theatre for social research and mono-performance, ‘Seen’ in the category of the best debut (young artist)
- 2019 Alytus City Culture Prize - to Andra Kavaliauskaitė, Artistic Director and Director of Alytus City Theatre, for social research and mono-performance, ‘Seen’
- 2019 At the International Theatre Festival Babel (Romania), the performance, ‘(Not) Children’s Games’ (director Albertas Vidžiūnas), was awarded with the prize for the best performance
- 2019 At Dalia Tamulevičiūtė Professional Theatre Festival in Varėna, the performance, ‘Angels of Scrooge Street’, was recognised as the best performance for children and also won nominations for the best artist and best composer (director Arvydas Vidžiūnas, composer Jonas Sakalauskas, artist Artūras Šimonis)
- 2019 At the National Drama Festival ‘Pakeleivingi’ in Anykščiai, the name of the laureate for the best performance of the festival was given to the performance, ‘Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone’ (director Arvydas Lebeliūnas)
- 2019 Alytus City Theatre performance for children, ‘Angels of Scrooge Street’ (director Arvydas Lebeliūnas) was nominated as the best performance in the children’s programme, ‘Com@’, of the International Professional Theatre Festival ‘Com•media’
- 2020 Alytus City Culture Prize was given to Inesa Pilvelytė, project manager, actress and director of Alytus City Theatre, for cultural initiatives gathering the community of Alytus city and high artistic level in organising events representing the city

Winners of festivals organized by Alytus City Theater

Laureates of the VIII International Theater Festival "Com•media" 2019

MAIN AWARDS:

Winner of the nomination for best performance – Klaipėda Drama Theater performance "The Sons of a Bitch" based on a play by Saulius Šaltenis, dir. Eimuntas Nekrošius

Winner of the Best Actor nomination – Darius Meškauskas (for the role of Varpininkas Karvelis in the performance of Klaipėda Drama Theater performance "The Sons of a Bitch" based on a play by Saulius Šaltenis, dir. Eimuntas Nekrošius)

Winner of the Best Actress nomination – Indrė Patkauskaitė (for the role of Katre in the performance of the Vilnius State Small Theater "Marti", dir. Gabrielė Tuminaitė)

Winners of the Best Director nomination – Jannik Elkær, Petras Lisauskas, Kristoffer Louis, Andrup Pedersen for the performance "M.I.S. All Night Long (DonGnu Troupe (Denmark))

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Winner of the audience performance nomination – improvisational theater "Next Corner" performance "Wonderful Things" based on a play by Duncano Macmillano, dir. Kirilas Glušajėvas

Winner of the nomination for Best "Com•moon•a" performance – performance "No Way Out" by the international theater company Flight of the Escapes, dir. Carolina Ortega (Great Britain)

Winner of the nomination for best "Com•@" performance – Alytus City Theatre performance "Skrudžas Street Angels" based on a play by Daiva Čepauskaitė, dir. Arvydas Lebeliūnas

Laureates of the VII International Theater Festival "Com•media" 2018

MAIN AWARDS:

Winner of the nomination for best performance – Lithuanian National Drama Theater performance "Doors" (dir. Jo Strømngren, Norway)

Winner of the Best Actor nomination – Rytis Saladžius (for the role of Rytas in the performance of Lithuania National Drama Theater "Doors", dir. J. Strømngren, Norway)

Winner of the Best Actress nomination – Viktorija Kuodytė (for the role of Victoria in the performance of State Youth Theater "Autonomy", dir. Árpád Schilling)

Winners of the Best Director nomination – Á. Schilling (for the State Youth Theater performance "Autonomy")

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Winner of the audience performance nomination – Kaunas National Drama Theater costume comedy with farce elements "I - Molier" (dir. Inesa Paliulytė)

Winner of the nomination for Best "Com•moon•a" performance – Artūras Areima Theater performance "Loser" (dir. A. Areima)

Winner of the nomination for best "Com • @" performance – Theater for Children "Teatriukas" performance "Green Alive" (dir. Agnė Sunklodaitė)

Laureates of the VI International Theater Festival "Com•media" 2017

MAIN AWARDS:

Winner of the nomination for best performance – Performance of the Šiauliai State Theater "Mine" (dir. A. Areima)

Winner of the Best Actor nomination – Arūnas Sakalauskas (for the role of Janis in the performance "Animal (Ku Kū)" (dir. Rolandas Atkočiūnas)

Winner of the Best Actress nomination – Judita Urnikytė (for the role of the Duchess in the Strange Theater performance "XII Night" (dir. Ieva Stundžytė)

Winners of the Best Director nomination – Paulius Ignatavičius (for the Vilnius Small Theater performance "Europeans")

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Winner of the audience performance nomination – Panevėžys Juozas Miltinis Theater performance "A Man in a Trap" (dir. Dainius Kazlauskas)

Winner of the nomination for Best "Com•moon•a" performance – syndicate "Bad Rabbits" interactive educational play "Loneliness. 1991" (dir. Giedrė Kriaučionytė and Eglė Kižaitė)

Laureates of the V International Theater Festival "Long Live Comedy" 2016

MAIN AWARDS:

Winner of the nomination for best performance – Vilnius Small Theater performance "Bedalis and the Charity" (dir. G. Tuminaitė)

Winner of the Best Actor nomination – duet of Jonas Baranauskas and Vytautas Gasiliūnas (for the role in the play "Stones in His Pockets")

Winner of the Best Actress nomination – V. Kuodytė (for the role in the "Art Fortress" performance "Master of Hunger")

Winners of the Best Director nomination – Gildas Aleksa (for the Strange Theater performance "Heraklis")

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Winner of the audience performance nomination – Kaunas City Chamber Theater performance "Stones in His Pockets" (dir. Bernardas Gytis Padegimas)

The award, established by folk art master Andrius Liaukas, is dedicated to the "Table Theatre" performance „Table of Dialect“

Laureates of the IV International Theater Festival "Long Live Comedy" 2015

MAIN AWARDS:

Winner of the nomination for best performance – Lithuanian National Drama Theater performance "Chaos" (dir. Yana Ross)

Winner of the Best Actor nomination – Daumantas Ciunis (for the role in the play "Suicide")

Winner of the Best Actress nomination – Rimantė Valiukaitė (for the role in the performance "Chaos")

Winners of the Best Director nomination – G. Tuminaitė (for the Vilnius Small Theater performance "Suicide")

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Winner of the audience performance nomination – Klaipėda State Musical Theater musical "Šuonuolynas" (dir. John Staniunas)

The winner of the discovery nomination is the performance of Kaunas Small Theater "Bestuburiada" (dir. Darius Rabašauskas)

Laureates of the III International Theater Festival "Long Live Comedy" 2014

MAIN AWARDS:

Winner of the nomination for best performance – State Youth Theater performance "Three Beloved" (dir. Algirdas Latėnas)

Winner of the Best Actor nomination – Algirdas Gradauskas (for the role in the performance "Democracy")

Winner of the Best Actress nomination – Jonė Dambrauskaitė (for the role in the play "Three Beloved")

Winners of the Best Director nomination – A. Latėnas (for the State Youth Theater performance "Three Beloved")

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Winner of the audience performance nomination – State Youth Theater performance "Three Beloved" (dir. Algirdas Latėnas)

The winner of the festival discovery nomination is the performance of Alytus City Theater "Without an address. Untitled" (dir. Inesa Pilvelytė); founder of the award – Nijolė Makštutienė

Neringa Varnelytė received an award established by Alytus District Municipality for merits to the theater

Laureates of the II International Theater Festival "Long Live Comedy" 2013

MAIN AWARDS:

Winner of the nomination for best performance – Šiauliai Drama Theater performance "Breadmaker's Wife" (dir. A. Lebeliūnas); The founder of the award is Alytus City Municipality

Winner of the Best Actor nomination – Sigitas Jakubauskas (for the role in the play "Breadmaker's wife"); Founder of the award Alytus sewing factory "Dainava"

Winner of the Best Actress nomination – Jevgenija Rusakova (for her role in the play "Thank you, Margo!"); founder of the award clothing salon "Bliss"

Winners of the Best Director nomination – Cezaris Graužinis (for the "Another Theater" musical "Another Surprise of Love"); the founders of the award are Aloyzas and Andrius Liaukai

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Winner of the audience performance nomination – Performance of Kaunas National Drama Theater "My Dear Pamela" (dir. A. Latėnas)

Sigitas Jakubauskas received an award established by Alytus District Municipality for merits to the theater

For the perspective, the award established by Alytus Media is dedicated to Klaipėda Youth Theater (for the performance "Bullets over Broadway"); founders of the award Alytausgidas.lt, Alytus News, Dzūkija Television, FM99 Radio and "After"

The award established by the Alytus City Theater for cooperation was dedicated to the Šilutė Chamber Theater

Laureates of the I International Theater Festival "Long Live Comedy" 2012

MAIN AWARDS:

Winner of the nomination for best performance – Strange Theater performance "Dear Citizens" (dir. Aidas Giniotis, Andrius Kaniava, Ieva Stundžytė, Vaidotas Žitkus); The founder of the award is Alytus City Municipality

Winner of the Best Actor nomination – Evaldas Jaras (for the role in the performance "Auditor"); founder of the award Juozas Daukšys

Winner of the Best Actress nomination – Eglė Gabrėnaitė (for the role in the play "Cemetery Club"); founder of the award Algimantas Žemaitis floriculture farm

Winners of the Best Director nomination – Rimas Tuminas (for the performance of Vilnius Small Theater "Auditor"); founder of the award Alytus College

SPECIAL AWARDS:

Winner of the audience performance nomination – Domino Theater performance "Window to the Parliament" (dir. Arvydas Večerskis)

The winner of the festival's discovery nomination is Dmitry Denisiuk (for his role in the play "Dinner of Fools"); founder of the award "Almoro"

For Perspective, the award established by Alytus Media is dedicated to Kaunas Small Theater for the performance "From Red Rat to Green Star"; founders of the award Alytausgidas. It, Alytus News, Dzūkija TV, FM99 radio

Original dramaturgy

Republican playwrights' competition organized by Alytus Theater

Winners of the 5th competition (2019)

I. Andra Kavaliauskaitė "Puf"

II. Goda Simonaitytė "Magic Moments"

III. Žydruolė Jonuškienė "The Predator of the Days ori (don't) want to die"

Winners of the 4th competition (2018)

I. Andrius Šiuša "Excursion to the actor's head"

II. Lukas Butkus "All the best, Jacob!"

III. Loreta Vilkytė "How are you not ashamed, children"

Winners of the 3th competition (2017)

I. L. Vilkytė "Auction of Unnecessary Parents (NTA)"

II. A. Šiuša "V(ictim) and (E)xecutioner"

III. Laurynas Katkus "Descent"

Winners of the 2nd competition (2016)

I. Dovilė Statkevičienė "Horizon"

II. Aidas Jurašius "Common Crimes"

III. L. Vilkytė "I will help you, teacher!"

Winners of the 1st competition (2015)

I. A. Šiuša "Matuzėlis travels to the sky"

II. D. Statkevičienė "Old Age"

III. Dainius Dirgėla "Interview"



Curator of the playwrights competition
Alma Purvinytė



All Alytus City Theatre performances (premieres)

1990 m.

Oskaras Milašius. 'EMPEROR JOHN THE HEARTLESS' – The author and director of the staging - Arvydas Kinderis, the author of the puppet – Loreta Skruibienė.

1991 m.

MAMONA by Anton Chekhov. The author and director of the staging – Arvydas Kinderis. Birutė Pūkelevičiūtė. CHRISTMAS GIFT. Director – Arvydas Kinderis.

1992 m.

Kazys Binkis. THE ADVENTURES OF DOMINYKAS AND HIS GRANDFATHER. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the authors of scenography and costumes – Loreta Liausaitė and Dalia Kimantaitė.

Ch. Kardos. FLYING CRAYFISH. The author and director of the staging - Loreta Liausaitė, the artist - Loreta Liausaitė.

Sheila Dileini. 'THE TASTE OF HONEY'. Director – Irena Alperytė.

1993 m.

DANCING IN THE MOONLIGHT. The choreographer – Natalija Fiodorova, director – Dalia Kimantaitė, scenography and costume authors – Loreta Liausaitė, Dalia Kimantaitė.

WIND COINS. Mythological saga. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the artist – Loreta Skruibienė. Judita Vaičiūnaitė.

CROSS STREET FAIRY TALE. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė.

1994 m.

Campaign. CATHEDRAL by Justinas Marcinkevičius. Director – Arvydas Kinderis. Rimas Morkūnas.

YOUNG SAILORS AND PIRATES. Director – Loreta Liausaitė, composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, artist – Loreta Liausaitė.

1995 m.

Augustas Strindbergas. FREKEN JULIA. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, composer – Algirdas Martinaitis, artist – Arvydas Norvaiša, costume designer – Aleksandra Jacovskytė.

Campaign. KING UBU BY ALFRED JERRY. Director – Arvydas Kinderis. Alan Alexander Milne.

MIKĖ AND OTHERS. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, the artist – Loreta Liausaitė, and the costume designer – Dalia Kimantaitė.

1996 m.

Saulius Šaltenis. SUGAR OF REMEMBRANCE The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Faustas Latėnas, the artist – Edmundas Šimoliūnas, the costume designer – Aleksandra Jacovskytė.

STATION CAROUSEL. Choreographer – Natalija Fiodorova, director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas. Oscar Wilde.

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, the artist – Loreta Liausaitė, and the costume designer – Dalia Kimantaitė.

1997 m.

Juozas Grušas. BEATRIC, RUN. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Gintaras Sodeika, artist – Edmundas Šimoliūnas.

Campaign. NATIONAL HERO by Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Director – Arvydas Kinderis. Maurice Maeterlinck.

THE BLUE BIRD. Director – Loreta Liausaitė, composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, artist - Jūratė Račinskaitė, costume designer – Aleksandra Jacovskytė.

1998 m.

Justinas Marcinkevičius. MINDAUGAS. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, composer – Gintaras Sodeika, artist – Redas Diržys.

Italo Calvino. THE BARON IN A TREE. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, the artist – Redas Diržys, and the costume designer – Dalia Kimantaitė.

Pierre Augustin Caronas de Beaumarchais. THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Gintaras Sodeika, artist – Marijus Jacovskis.

1999 m.

Anton Chekhov. THE SEAGULL. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, composer – Gintaras Sodeika, artist – Marijus Jacovskis.

William Golding. THE LORD OF FLIES. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, the artist – Marijus Jacovskis.

Hans Christian Andersen. THE NIGHTINGALE. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, the artist – Loreta Liausaitė.

Eduardo de Filippo. CYLINDER. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Gintaras Sodeika, artist – Marijus Jacovskis.

2000 m.

Pamela Travers. THE STAR OF THE MAYOR. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, the artist – Loreta Liausaitė.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt. THE COUNTRYMAN AND NATIONAL HERO. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, composer – Gintaras Sodeika.

Birutė Pūkelevičiūtė. CHRISTMAS GIFT. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, artist – Jūratė Račinskaitė.

2001 m.

Tennessee Williams. GLASS MANOR. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Faustas Latėnas, artist – Jūratė Račinskaitė.

Edmundas Niziurskis. UNEXPECTED GUESTS. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, artist – Redas Diržys.

Jerome David Salinger. THE CATCHER IN THE RYE. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Martynas Bialobžeskis, artist – Marijus Jacovskis.

Hans Christian Andersen. THE SNOW QUEEN. The author and director of the production – Arvydas Kinderis, the composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, the artist – Marijus Jacovskis.

2002 m.

Mykolas Jackevičius, Jokūbas Skliutauskas. DIARY FOR YOU, LIDA. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, composer – Gintaras Sodeika, artist – Marta Vosyliūtė.

Astrid Lindgren. KARLSSON-ON-THE-ROOF. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, the artist – Marta Vosyliūtė.

Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius. SON-IN-LAW. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Gintaras Sodeika, artist – Marta Vosyliūtė.

Kostas Kubilinskas. BEBENCHIUKAS AND THE SIMPLETON SISTER. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, artist – Marta Vosyliūtė.

2003 m.

THE MAN FROM LA MANCHA by Miguel de Cervantes, Dale Wasserman. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Gintaras Sodeika, artist – Rūta Biliūnaitė.

Oscar Wilde. THE HAPPY PRINCE. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, the artist – Loreta Liausaitė.

William Shakespeare. ROMEO AND JULIET. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, composer – Martynas Bialobžeskis, artist – Marijus Jacovskis.

2004 m.

Saulius Šaltenis. ŠKAC, MIRTIE, VISADOS, ŠKAC. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

Richard Bach. JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL. Director – Algis Mažeika, composer – Vainius Sodeika, artist – Artūras Šimonis.

Campaign. THE PURGATORY by Dante. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė.

Jevgenijus Švarcas. CINDERELLA. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Vainius Sodeika, the artist – Loreta Luišaitytė.

2005 m.

Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas. IN THE SHADOW OF THE ALTARS. EXPERIMENTAL DAYS. The author and director of the production – Arvydas Kinderis, the composer – Martynas Bialobžeskis, the artist – Artūras Šimonis.

Melvin Burgess. HEROIN. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Vainius Sodeika, the artist – Loreta Luišaitytė.

Hermann Hesse. AUGUST. The author and director of the staging – Judita Norvaišaitė, the composer – Feliksas Bajoras, the artists – Marija Benetytė and Ona Juškienė.

Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas. IN THE SHADOW OF THE ALTARS. LIFE GOES. The author and director of the production – Arvydas Kinderis, the composer – Martynas Bialobžeskis, the artist – Artūras Šimonis.

Hans Christian Andersen. THUMBELINA. The author and director of the production – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Mantautas Krukauskas, the artist – Artūras Šimonis.

2006 m.

Vytautas Mačernis. UNDER A MISTY SKY OF IGNORANCE. Director – Arnoldas Jalianauskas, composer – Arnoldas Jalianauskas, artist – Artūras Šimonis.

Amelie Nothomb. FEAR. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Jurgita Mieželytė, the artist – Artūras Šimonis.

Franz Kafka. METAMORPHOSIS. The author and director of the production – Arvydas Kinderis, the composer – Jurgita Mieželytė, the artist – Artūras Šimonis.

Rudolf Erich Raspe. THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Jurgita Mieželytė, the artist – Artūras Šimonis.

2007 m.

SOLO FOR FIVE. Author and director – Algis Mažeika, composer – Mantautas Krukauskas, artist – Artūras Šimonis.

Sigitas Parulskis. ENDLESS LONELINESS BETWEEN TWO. The author and director of the staging – Arvydas Kinderis, the artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

Sue Townsend. MATURATION SUFFERING. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Jurgita Mieželytė, the artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

Joseph Rudyard Kipling. MAUGLI. Director – Algis Mažeika, composer – Mantautas Krukauskas, artist – Živilė Vasiliauskaitė.

2008 m.

Marius Ivaškevičius. STORY FROM THE CLOUD. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, composer – Jonas Jurkūnas, artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

Jerome K. Jerome. THREE MEN IN A BOAT. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the composer – Jonas Jurkūnas, and the artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

2009 m.

Cornelia Funke. GHOSTLY ADVENTURES IN A STONY CASTLE. The author and director of the staging – Marius Sadauskas, the composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, the artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

FISH SHEPHERD. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, movement director – Algis Mažeika, libretto author – Dainius Gintalas, composer – Rokas Radzevičius, artist – Laura Luišaitytė, costume designer – Gintarė Vaivadaitė.

CAIN AND ABEL. DAILY DEATH. Scriptwriter and director – Loreta Liausaitė, composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, video artist – Vytautas Stanionis.

BARBORA RADVILAITĖ. The author and director of the script – Arvydas Kinderis, the composer – Jonas Jurkūnas, the artist – Julija Skuratova.

Tove Jansson. COMET TROLLS IN THE MUMMY VALLEY. The author and director of the staging – Marius Sadauskas, the composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas, the artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

2010 m.

Julius Keleras. 58 DREAMS. Director – Arvydas Kinderis, composer – Jonas Jurkūnas, artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

Juozas Grušas. BEATRICE, RUN. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, composer – Jonas Jurkūnas, artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

Virgilijus Veršulis. IN THE LIFT. Director – Marius Sadauskas, composer – Jonas Jurkūnas, artist – Laura Luišaitytė.

Hans Christian Andersen. THE NIGHTINGALE. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, the artist – Loreta Liausaitė.

2011 m.

I LOVED, I LOVE, I WAS LOVED by the sonnets of William Shakespeare. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, movement director – Algis Mažeika, composer – Jonas Jurkūnas, artist – Indrė Pačėsaitė.

Moliere. TARTUFFE OR THE HYPOCRITE. Director – Dalia Kimantaitė, artist – Andželika Šulcaitė, composer – Jonas Jurkūnas.

Carlo Collodi. THE TEACHING STORIES OF MEDINUKAS, NAMED PINOCCHIO. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, the choreographer – Gita Strikytė-Jakučionienė.

2012 m.

Jurgis Kunčinas. TŪLA, OR WE ARE AN OCCUPIED COUNTRY. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the author of the video projection – Vytautas Stanionis, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius.

Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius. WITCH. The author and director of the staging – Dalia Kimantaitė, the artist – Anželika Šulcaitė, the composer – Andrius Abromavičius.

Sigutė Ach. AMBROZIJUS, PURKIUS AND... Author and director of the staging – Inesa Pilvelytė, artist – Gintarė Markevičienė, composer – Andrius Abromavičius.

LITHUANIAN HAS COME based on the works of Juozas Erlickas. Scriptwriter – Vilija Rūta Niauronytė, directors – Dalia Kimantaitė and Vilija Rūta Niauronytė, artist – Galius Kličius, composer – Alvydas Jegelevičius.

2013 m.

Frank McCourt. TEACHER The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, and the artist – Neringa Keršulytė.

ŠVENTMARĖ according to the short story by Sofija Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė. Author of the staging – Liucija Armonaitė, director – Arvydas Kinderis, artist – Aneta Kairis, composer – Jonas Jurkūnas, movement director – Algis Mažeika.

Samuel Marshak. CAT'S HOUSE. Director – Jonas Gaižauskas, composer – Jurgis Gaižauskas, artist - Gintarė Markevičienė, choreographer – Gita Strikytė.

COCO SECRET. The author and director of the production – Dalia Kimantaitė, the artist – Anželika Šulcaitė, the composer – Mantautas Krukauskas.

2014 m.

Renata Šerelytė. KRAKATUKAI ON THE MOON. The author and director of the staging – Loreta Liausaitė, the costume designer – Neringa Keršulytė, the composer – Andrius Abromavičius.

Jurgis Kunčinas. NO ADDRESS. NO NAME. The author and director of the staging – Inesa Pilvelytė, the artist – Alfreda Urmanavičienė, the author of music – Darius Mileris (Nojus), the choreographer – Petras Lisauskas, the author of video installations – Vytautas Stanionis.

FIRE HUNT AND BEATERS. Authors of the libretto – Saulius Šaltenis and Leonidas Jacinevičius, composer – Giedrius Kuprevičius, director – Gytis Padegimas, artist – Birutė Ukrinaitė, ballet master – Indrė Puišytė, music department managers – Sabina Martinaitytė and Audronė Eitmanavičiūtė, video material – Simonas Glinskis, Artūras Barysas, Edgaras Naujalis.

Anton Chekhov. TRAPS. Director – Loreta Liausaitė, composer – Eugenijus Kanevičius, artist – Artūras Šimonis.

2015 m.

Upton Sinclair. AMERICAN DREAM. Director and author of the idea of the scenery – Albertas Vidžiūnas, composer – Antanas Jasenka, consultant of the stage movement – Giedrė Kalinauskienė.

Aurelija Čeredėjevaitė. DANCING IN A POT OR THE DREAM STOUT. Director – Jonas Gaižauskas, scenographer – Mantas Kazakevičius, artist – Vilija Gaižauskaitė.

Steve Jones. HERO AND ZERO. Director – Petras Lisauskas, scenography and lighting artist – Alfreda Urmanavičienė, costume designer – Vilija Gaižauskaitė, composer – Andrius Abromavičius.

TUAŠ. Choreography and performance – Petras Lisauskas, music – Saulius Petreikis.

PX | BEFORE THE CROSSROAD. Set designer – Mantas Kazakevičius, costume designer – Vilija Gaižauskaitė.

Justas Tertelis. THE SEAGULL. Director – Andra Kavaliauskaitė.

THE BEST GIFT. Director and playwright - Andra Kavaliauskaitė, costume designer – Gintarė Markevičienė, composers – Saulius Petreikis and Donatas Petreikis.

2016 m.

SALT based on the watercolours of Benjaminas Jenčius. The author of the idea and choreographer – Gita Strikytė-Jakučionienė, the author of music – Elena Neniškytė, the costume

designer – Andra Kavaliauskaitė, the lighting designer – Vytautas Skruibys, the author of the video projections – Alius Mikelionis.

Harald Müller. SILENT NIGHT. Director – Robertas Šarknickas, set designer and costume designer – Neringa Keršulytė, composer – Arvydas Mikalauskas.

ŠIURPĖS. The author of the idea – Inesa Pilvelytė, the director – Albertas Vidžiūnas, the set designer and costume designer – Jonas Arčikauskas, the choreographer – Indrė Puišytė, the composer – Saulius Petreikis, and the author of poetic texts – Sigitas Geda.

Sergei Kozlov. 'HEDGEHOG IN THE FOG'. Director – Andra Kavaliauskaitė, artist – Neringa Keršulytė.

Morris Panych. GOODBYE, MR LORENCE. Director – Arvydas Lebeliūnas, artist – Sergejus Bocullo.

2017 m.

Steve Worland. D EFFECT. Director – Andra Kavaliauskaitė, musical writers – the group, 'Undan'.

Herkus Kunčius. (NOT) CHILDREN'S GAMES. Director – Albertas Vidžiūnas, artist – Artūras Šimonis, composer – Antanas Jasenka, video – Agnė Marcinkevičiūtė.

Brian Friel. PHILADELPHIA, HERE I COME. Director – Gytis Padegimas, author of scenography and costumes – Birutė Ukrinaitė, composer – Raimundas Martinkėnas, choreographer – Indrė Puišytė.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. LITTLE PRINCE. The author and director of the staging – Andra Kavaliauskaitė, the author of the illustrations – Urtė Jasenkaitė, the composers – Saulius Petreikis and Donatas Petreikis.

2018 m.

Mindaugas Valiukas. FOUNDATIONS FROM MINDAUGAS CASTLE. FAKE STONE. Director – Arvydas Lebeliūnas, composer – Jonas Sakalauskas, scenographer – Sergejus Bocullo, costume designer – Berta Bocullaitė, light designer – Vladas Šerstabojevas.

THE LIFE OF OTHER PEOPLE IS THE LIFE OF OTHER PEOPLE according to the texts of William Shakespeare. Author and director of the staging – Gildas Aleksa, set designer and costume designer – Kotryna Daujotaitė, composer – Jokūbas Tulaba, lighting artist – Aistis Lansbergas, and the image author – Alius Mikelionis.

SEEN. Authors – Andra Kavaliauskaitė, Elena Neniškytė, Saida Saldukaitė, Guoda Dinsmonaitė, Karolina Jarmala, Olia Grinko, Dovilė Venciūtė-Zubrickienė, Karolina Venciūtė, Povilas Jarmala, Alius Mikelionis.

Herkus Kunčius. ARENA OF FREEDOM. Director – Albertas Vidžiūnas, artist – Artūras Šimonis, composer – Antanas Jasenka, choreographer – Petras Lisauskas.

Eduardas Mieželaitis. ZUIKIS PUIKIS. Director – Andra Kavaliauskaitė, composer – Laurynas Vaitulevičius, illustration artists – students of Alytus Primary School Sakalėlis and School-Kindergarten Drevinukas.

Daiva Čepauskaitė. ANGELS OF SCROOGE STREET. Director – Arvydas Lebeliūnas, composer – Jonas Sakalauskas, artist and set designer – Artūras Šimonis.

2019 m.

Henrik Ibsen. KINGDOM. Director – Arvydas Lebeliūnas, artist – Artūras Šimonis.

Jonas Sapdaru. FREELANCERS. Director – Agnė Dilytė, set designer and costume designer – Artūras Šimonis, composer – Antanas Jasenka.

DIFFERENT. Director and playwright – Andra Kavaliauskaitė, composer – Elena Neniškytė, creator of visualizations – Violeta Mackialo, choreographer – Agnė Juška Petrulė.

Tennessee Williams. TRAM OF LUST. Director - Suren Shahverdyan.

Aldona Liobytė. 'HUNCHBACK MUSICIAN'. Director – Jonas Gaižauskas, artist – Gintarė Markevičienė, composer – Andrius Abromavičius, light artist – Vytautas Skruibys, sound director – Marius Franckevičius, choreographers – Barbora Bilinskaitė and Greta Žiogelytė.

2020 m.

Herkus Kunčius. JONAS SOBIESKIS. Director – Albertas Vidžiūnas, composer – Titas Petrikis, artist – Artūras Šimonis, author of video projections – Alius Mikelionis.

William Shakespeare. MACBETH. The author and director of the adaptation – Paata Tsikolia, the composer – Tamar Putkaradze, the artist – Artūras Šimonis, and the choreographer – Indrė Puišytė.

9.18. Director – Andra Kavaliauskaitė, composer – Adas Gecevičius, author of visualisations – Violeta Mackialo, costume design 'Between Lab', choreographer – Miglė Praniauskaitė.

JEWISH STREET. Director – Albertas Vidžiūnas, ensemble leader – Larisa Vyšniauskienė, artist – Kęstutis Vaičiulis, assistant director – Alma Purvinytė.

Tours in Lithuania

City	Theatres / Venues	Performances Shown	Festivals
Vilnius	Lithuanian National Drama Theatre; State Small Theatre of Vilnius ('Elfs'); Lithuanian State Youth Theatre; Russian Drama Theatre; Domino Theatre; Vilnius Chamber Theatre; Arts Printing House; Vilnius Academy of Arts	'Karlsson-on-the-Roof'; 'Heroin'; 'The Catcher in the Rye'; 'The Happy Prince'; 'Škac, mirtie, visados škac'; 'Thumbelina'; 'Three Men in a Boat'; 'Under the Misty Sky of Ignorance'; 'Metamorphosis'; 'In the Shadow of the Altars' 'Part 1: Experimental Days'; 'The Nightingale'; 'Maugli'; 'Šventmarė'; 'Romeo and Juliet'; 'The Canterville Ghost'; 'Beatrice, Run'; 'I loved, I love, you were loved'; 'Maturation Suffering'; '(Not) Children's Games'; 'Philadelphia, Here I come'; 'Silent Night'; 'Witch'; 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio'; 'Coco Secret'; 'Tūla, or We Are an Occupied Country'; 'Fish Shepherd'; 'Cinderella'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; 'Zuikis Puikis'; 'The Little Prince'; 'Pxl Before the Crossroad'; 'Goodbye, Mr. Lawrence'; 'Dancing in a Pot or the Dream Stout'; 'Seen'	Theatre Festival for Children and Youth (2003); LNDD Festival 'Versmė' (2006; 2008; 2010)



Kaunas	National Kaunas Drama Theatre; Kaunas State Musical Theatre; Kaunas Little Theatre; Girstutis Culture Palace; Vytautas Magnus University and KTU theatre halls; Kaunas Chamber Theatre; Kaunas 'Tautos namai'; Kaunas old marina scene	'Karlsson-on-the-Roof'; 'Heroin'; 'The Catcher in the Rye'; 'The Happy Prince'; 'Škac, mirtie, visados škac'; 'Thumbelina'; 'Three Men in a Boat'; 'Under the Misty Sky of Ignorance'; 'Metamorphosis'; 'In the Shadow of the Altars' Part 1: Experimental Days'; 'The Nightingale'; 'Maugli'; 'Šventmarė'; 'Romeo and Juliet'; 'The Canterville Ghost'; 'Beatrice, Run'; 'I loved, I love, you were loved'; 'Maturation Suffering'; '(Not) Children's Games'; 'Philadelphia, Here I come'; 'Silent Night'; 'Witch'; 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio'; 'Coco Secret'; 'Tūla, or We Are an Occupied Country'; 'Fish Shepherd'; 'Cinderella'; 'Barbora Radvilaitė'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; 'Zuikis Puikis'; 'The Little Prince'; 'Pxl Before the Crossroad'; 'Goodbye, Mr. Lawrence'; 'Seen'; 'Different'	2010, the performance, 'Fish Shepherd' (dir. Dalia Kimantaitė), shown in Kaunas old marina scene; Amateur Theatre Festival 'Kaunas Rampa 2013'; Kaunas Chamber Theatre Festival 'Starting Point' (2018; 2019; 2020); FRIDA White Ribbon Festival (2018; 2019)
Klaipėda	Klaipėda Musical Theatre; Klaipėda Drama Theatre	'In the Shadow of the Altars' Part 2: 'Life Goes'; 'Cinderella'; 'The Adventures of Baron Munchausen'; 'Maturation Suffering'; 'Barbora Radvilaitė'; 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; 'Seen'; 'Different'; 'Angels of Scrooge Street'	Festival of Performances for Children and Youth 'Asitežas' (2018)
Šiauliai	Šiauliai Drama Theatre	'The Adventures of Baron Munchausen'; 'Karlsson-on-the-Roof'; 'The Catcher in the Rye'; 'The Canterville Ghost'; 'The Happy Prince'; 'Beatrice, Run'; 'Maturation Suffering'; 'Barbora Radvilaitė'; '(Not) Children's Games'; 'Traps'	

Panevėžys	Juozas Miltinis Drama Theatre, Panevėžys Musical Drama Theatre; Theatre 'Art'	'Karlsson-on-the-Roof'; 'Heroin'; 'The Catcher in the Rye'; 'The Happy Prince'; 'Škac, mirtie, visados škac'; 'Thumbelina'; 'Three Men in a Boat'; 'Under the Misty Sky of Ignorance'; 'Metamorphosis'; 'In the Shadow of the Altars' Part 1: 'Experimental Days'; 'The Nightingale'; 'Maugli'; 'In the Lift'; 'Šventmarė'; 'Romeo and Juliet'; 'The Canterville Ghost'; 'Beatrice, Run'; 'I loved, I love, you were loved'; 'Maturation Suffering'; 'No Address. No name'; 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio'; 'Tūla, or We Are an Occupied Country'; 'Barbora Radvilaitė'; 'Coco Secret'; 'Fish Shepherd'; 'Cinderella'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; 'The Little Prince'; 'Seen'	Chamber Performance Festival (Theatre 'Art', 2009; 2013; 2018; 2019; 2020)
Marijampolė	Marijampolė Culture Centre; Marijampolė Drama Theatre	'In the Shadow of the Altars' Part 2: 'Life Goes'; 'Cinderella'; 'The Happy Prince'; 'Škac, mirtie, visados škac'; 'Coliukė'; 'Three Men in a Boat'; 'Under the Misty Sky of Ignorance'; 'The Adventures of Baron Munchausen'; 'Maturation Suffering'; 'Barbora Radvilaitė'; 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; 'Traps'; 'Seen'; 'Angels of Scrooge Street'	
Druskininkai	Sanatorium 'Eglė'; Druskininkai Youth Employment Centre; Druskininkai outdoor scene	'Maturation Suffering'; 'Heroin'; 'The Happy Prince'; 'Škac, mirtie, visados škac'; 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio'; 'Fish Shepherd'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; '(Not) Children's Games'	2010, the performance, 'Fish Shepherd' (director Dalia Kimantaitė), shown on Druskininkai outdoor scene; Druskininkai Festival of Performances for Children (2013)

Varėna	Varėna Cultural Center; Varėna outdoor scene	'In the Shadow of the Altars' Part 2: 'Life Goes'; 'Cinderella'; 'The Happy Prince'; 'Škac, mirtie, visados škac'; 'Coliukė'; 'Three Men in a Boat'; 'Under the misty sky of ignorance'; 'The Adventures of Baron Munchausen'; 'Witch'; 'No Address. No Name'; 'Traps'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; '(Not) Children's Games'; 'Philadelphia, Here I come'; 'Silent Night'; 'Freedom Arena'; 'Angels of Scrooge Street'; 'Foundations from Mindaugas Castle'. Fake Stone'	Dalia Tamulevičiūtė Professional Theatre Festival (2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019)
Anykščiai	Anykščiai Culture Centre	'pxI Before the Crossroad'; '(Not) Children's games'; 'Foundations from Mindaugas Castle. Fake Stone.'	Festival of Professional Theatres 'Pakeleivingi' (2018; 2019)
Ukmergė	Ukmergė Culture Centre	'Heroin'; 'Maturation Suffering'; 'The Catcher in the Rye'; 'Traps'; 'Little Prince'; 'Coco Secret'; 'Seen'	
Visaginas	Visaginas Culture Centre	'ŽuvėdPra'; 'Seen'	Mono-performance festival, 'Reflection' (2017; 2018)
Telšiai	Telšiai Žemaitė Drama Theatre	'In the Shadow of the Altars' Part 1: 'Experimental Days'; 'Heroin'; 'Maugli'; 'In the Lift'	
Vilkaviškis	Vilkaviškis Culture Centre	'Mauglis'; 'Heroin'; 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio'; 'In the Lift'; 'Three Men in a Boat'	Vilkaviškis Theater Festival (2009)
Prienai	Prienai Culture Centre	'Heroin'; 'Maturation Suffering'; 'The Catcher in the Rye'; 'Traps'; 'pxI Before the Crossroads'; '(Not) Children's Games'; 'Little Prince'; 'Dancing in a Pot or the Dream Stout'; 'Seen'	

Lazdijai	Lazdijai Culture Centre	'Maugli'; 'Heroin'; 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio'; 'In the Lift'; 'The Catcher in the Rye'; 'Traps'; 'pxI Before the Crossroad'; 'Seen'; 'Angels of Scrooge Street'	
Biržai	Biržai Culture Centre	'Heroin'; 'Maturation Suffering'; 'The Catcher in the Rye'; 'Škac, mirtie, visados škac'; 'Three Men in a Boat'; 'The Little Prince'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; 'Seen'	
Žagarė	Žagarė Culture Centre	'Barbora Radvilaitė'; 'Tula or We Are an Occupied Country'	Žagarė Festival (2018; 2019)
Joniškis	Joniškis Synagogue, Joniškis Saulės Progymnasium	'Seen'; 'Hunchback Musician'	
Naisiai		'Seen'	Asitežas Festival of Performances for Children and Youth (2018)
Daugai	Daugai Culture Centre	'Seen'	Asitežas Festival of Performances for Children and Youth (2018)
Kupiškis	Kupiškis Culture Centre	'Traps'; 'In the lift'; 'Tram of Lust'; 'Hunchback Musician'	Festival ART DO (2018; 2020)
Mažeikiai	Mažeikiai Culture Centre	'Under the Misty Sky of Ignorance'; 'Maugli'; 'Heroin'	
Birštonas	Birštonas Culture Centre	'Traps'; 'Zuikis Puikis'	
Raseiniai, Viduklė	District schools	'Seen'	
Kėdainiai	Kėdainiai Culture Centre	'Heroin'; 'Seen'; 'Hedgehog in the Fog'; 'pxI Before the Crossroads'	
Simnas	Simnas Culture Centre	'Traps'; 'Seen'; 'Angels of Scrooge Street'	
Seirijai	Seiriai Culture House	'Traps'; 'Zuikis Puikis'	

Merkinė	Merkinė town	Merkinė town celebration	
Rumšiškės	Lithuanian Folk Museum	'Fish Shepherd'; 'pxI Before the Crossroads'	
Rokiškis		'Traps'	
Mažeikiai		'Mauglis'; 'Heroin'	

Vilnius 2005
 For the Theatre of
 Alytus City -
 Good luck with Heroínas
 Hope it is fantastic!
Melvin Burgess

Britų rašytojo Melvino Burgesso autografas ir linkėjimas
 Alytaus miesto teatrui, pagal jo knygą „Heroínas“
 pastačiusiam to paties pavadinimo spektaklį jaunimui





Tours in USA: Eugenijus Rakauskas, Jonas Gaižauskas, Rasa Grigutytė, Tomas Kunčinas, Inesa Pilvelytė, Ona Gudaitytė, Eglė Juškaitė, Vidas Vaškius



Alytus... Chicago. Geography of city theatre tours

1994, Sweden, Baltic Jubilee Festival. Performance: 'Dances in the Moonlight' (director Natalia Fiodorova).

19 November 2004, Pusk, Poland. Performances: 'Happy Prince' (director and staging author Loreta Liausaitė) and 'Škac, mirtie, visados škac' (director Dalia Kimantaitė).

8 October 2010, Augustow, Poland. Performance: 'Barbora Radvilaitė' (scriptwriter and director Arvydas Kinderis).

September 2016, USA. Performances: 'Coco Secret' (director and staging author Dalia Kimantaitė) and 'American Dream' (director and author of the scenery idea Albertas Vidžiūnas); 'Dancing in a Pot or the Dream Stout' (director Jonas Gaižauskas).

October 2017, London, United Kingdom. Performances: 'Coco Secret' (director and staging author Dalia Kimantaitė) and 'Dancing in a Pot or the Dream Stout' (director Jonas Gaižauskas).

October 2017, Los Angeles and Chicago, USA Performances: 'The Teaching Stories of Medinukas, named Pinocchio' (director and staging author Loreta Liausaitė), 'Tūla' (director and staging author Loreta Liausaitė) and 'Traps' (director Loreta Liausaitė).

June 2019, Babel Festival, Romania. Performance: '(Non) Children's Games' (director Albertas Vidžiūnas).

2019 Poti International Theatre Festival, Sacartvel. Performance: 'American Dream' (director and author of the scenery idea Albertas Vidžiūnas).

‘Being in a performance is a patriotic duty of Alytus’ residents’

Birutė Malaškevičiūtė

In pre-war Alytus, the performance was not an exotic spectacle. The cultural literacy of the city people was noticed and evaluated by the republican press of that time: ‘It should be noted that the trip by bus from Alytus to Kaunas lasts no more than 2 and a half hours. An Alytus resident goes to Kaunas on average at least once a month. After arriving one time, an Alytus resident will carefully follow the repertoire of the state theatre in newspapers. Upon arrival in Kaunas, the Alytus resident will definitely take advantage and go to the opera, ballet or play.’

When the State Theatre was touring in Alytus on May 25-26, 1931, having previously presented performances in Marijampolė, the city was pleasantly enlightened. Alytus residents no longer had to go to Kaunas to watch the performances and more and more Kaunas residents appeared in Alytus. The city was highly favoured by trade agents from the temporary capital, with large briefcases and suitcases loaded with a variety of commodities. In summer, it was possible to meet ladies from Kaunas in Alytus who came here to have a rest in summer houses. The main activity of their day was to change clothes every couple of hours. And here are Kaunas actors...

When the State Theatre arrived, it was fun for the people of Alytus, but it did not cause a sensational furore. It was much more interesting to watch the artists in the city: the news immediately spread, in which city hotels they stayed, how many rooms they reserved, with whom they stayed, where they dined, what food they ordered, which artists drank ‘to stimulate the appetite’, how they behaved and whether the actresses really dressed up.

The newspapers described the mood in Alytus in those days as: ‘Nobody is interested in what they will perform - everyone is only interested in the fact that the performance will be shown.’ Coming to a performance is a patriotic duty of Alytus’ residents. And although the performances were staged in a military theatre, far from the city, several buses, however, drove members of the audience from the city to the theatre and back.’

The performances in Alytus were far more successful than in Marijampolė: no one huddled at the ticket office, they did not sit in the hall ‘squeezed like salted herring in a barrel’, the police did not have to keep order. The comedy, ‘Money of Pūkis’, was shown to the full hall of spectators who enjoyed, if not the work itself, then at least the charming performances of the artists. There was a shortage of tickets for the drama, ‘Outside the Monastery’, in Marijampolė. People rushed into the theatre by force and only the police managed to bring order. The performance moved some Marijampolė viewers so much that they were crying in the hall.

In Alytus, the hall of the uhlan regiment was much larger, so the theatre put decorations in it, which really enlivened the performances. On the first evening, a more successful five-act performance, ‘Outside the Monastery’, was shown. It started at 8 p.m., after the advertisements had threatened that those who were late would not be allowed in after the performance had started. The performance ended almost at midnight. The tired and hungry artists had dinner at the city’s only restaurant. While waiting for the actors, the restaurant waiter secretly sipped the bitter and was quickly becoming more hilarious. When the other employees understood the reason for his hilarity, it was too late to do anything... Everyone was satisfied with the achievement of at least being able to take a bottle of bitter from him.

When the actors came, the waiter decided to show his acting skills. Before bringing food and drinks to the table, he clung to one actor to play a famous anecdote, ‘In the Armenian Brewery’. To the disappointment of all colleagues, the actor agreed. And the staging began:

- Can I eat at your place?
- Sure! That is what we work for.
- What do you have?
- Everything you want, Sir.
- Make me a schnitzel with an egg, please, and for the starter I’d like...
- Sorry, I can’t serve you a main course, the kitchen is no longer working. It’s late.
- Then, please, give me bread, butter, and sour milk with potatoes.
- With potatoes... with potatoes... No potatoes.
- Then give me the ham, vinaigrette, and tomatoes.
- Our chef does not know how to make vinaigrette.
- Then give cold veal instead of vinaigrette.
- We do not have veal.
- So, what do you have?
- Everything. Steak, goulash...
- What do you mean steak with goulash? The kitchen is closed.
- Absolutely right, it doesn’t work but we have meat left after dinner that can be heated.

The waiter perfectly staged the anecdote (maybe the man sipped the bitter not out of having nothing to do, but to quell the fear of his acting debut?), but the artists applauded him very ‘weakly’. Because art is poorly ‘digested’ on an empty stomach...



PHOTOGRAPHS:

Dovilė Balčiūnaitė-Svirskė,
Zenonas Bulgakovas,
Povilas Jarmala,
Dmitrij Matvejev,
Algirdas Musneckis,
Vytautas V. Stanionis,
Zita Stankevičienė,
Audrius Šidlauskas,
Zenonas Šilinskas,
Alytus City Theater Archive
Darius Babijonas,
Vida Grišmanauskienė,
Alius Mikelionis,
Personal archives and unknown authors

Compiler DARIUS BABIJONAS

Publisher: Alytus City Theatre, Rotušės str. 2, LT-62141 Alytus
+370 315 73 858 | info@alytausteatras.lt | www.alytausteatras.lt

Printed in Kaunas University of technology publishing house "Technology"
Studentų str. 54, LT-51424 Kaunas