

ASPEKTin – feministický webzin (ASPEKTin – feminist webzine)

published on November 9, 2006

EUBICA KOBOVÁ

A brief note about short, intensive and excellent performance

Creators of the performance “translated” *Cells* of Louis Bourgeois in the most restrictive way – like cells. Not cells that would evoke basis of an organism, but cells that close down the life somewhere on the border of the organic and inorganic. They are permeated through by what we’ve got used to call (for the lack of patience when expressing ourselves) the inner world and the externality. Furthermore, craving for self-imposed solitude and isolation and constraint by the surrounding. Negotiating one’s own latitude and beforehand prepared space for living – a house. Phenomenontheatre has been rigorously dealing with dramatic “material” for longer time; “material” that is hard to reduce more – the body of an actor or actress, their voice, silence and rhythmical speech. Concerning about the last production of Phenomenontheatre, Slávka Daubnerová took charge of the scenic concept, direction and acting.

A monodrama could be an almost exhibitionistic show unfolding at speed, when a performer tries to fill the space on stage, usually crowded by other characters, with word flow and motion. (It could be seen at its best in the production of Mark Ravenhill, *Product*, at the festival Divadelná Nitra.) Regardless the fact, that Slávka Daubnerová writes “father’s” reproach on the wall – “You talk too much” – she doesn’t talk much in reality. Yet she cultivates texts from the diaries and notes of a French artist Louis Bourgeois very intently. Bourgeois, who lived in a tense family constellation created by her father, mother and a governess, ergo father’s mistress living with the family for ten years, keeps analyzing these basal relationships and is trying to find a house, a chamber, a cell to live in.

Slávka Daubnerová and Eduard Kudláč succeeded in transforming Bourgeois’s, as well as our complicated thoughts about elementary things into an artistic language that is intelligible even to demanding audience. Not only as a student of maths, mingled Bourgeois between the search of an explicit symbolic system and disappointment from

the existence of other than Euclid's geometry. On stage, Slávka Daubnerová is replacing jars, liquids in them, and other schematized pieces of furniture. She is doing it extremely carefully, as if every single move has been thought over before. She moves among densely spaced jars with no vacillation, nor treading water. Movements among schemes, sketched on the ground plan of the house - on stage, are precise and pragmatic. Words, however precisely spoken and put in a kind of hierarchic pyramid on the white board / wall of a house / stage, seem to be "redundant" at this point. The talking body, with all its capacities, becomes something more than a remover or manipulator with objects and people in its contiguity. The voice, so well impersonated on stage and so well understandable through some incarnated cognition, keeps puzzling by how it is produced by the body visible on stage. Talking about self, as it were mouth of Bourgeois, makes this voice individualized and somehow irreplaceable. It can be produced only by one creator, and even if it's replayed by somebody else, there will always be the original that must be compared with fidelity of the copy. Obviously, it's not the case of this production. Jar schemes, almost anaphoric reciting in the finale, and title of the performance inwrought to the bulletin with a cross-stitch - they are repetition, permutation. Yet the repetition is not the reason for a comfortable and identifying sigh of relief in sense of "I've experienced this before," or "I know my / the original." It is rather a place of successful and unsuccessful attempts to describe, to experience, to act, to speak, and to project oneself, one's houses, and cells. I will repeat the non-self-evident in a way that is often repeated: *Cells* of Slávka Daubnerová and Phenomenontheatre turned out very well.

Literární noviny

Nr .21/2007, p.13

Nová dráma/New drama festival 2007

ROMAN SIKORA

journalist, playwright

Triumph and fall of New drama 2007

The last remarkable production of the festival New drama (awarded a special prize of jury) was the auctorial production of Slávka Daubnerová from Prievidza, *Cells*, standing on the edge of performance and coming out of the records of the artist Louis Bourgeois. Harrowing confession of a woman lost in her existence and forcing way to its sense, with occasional tendency to observe the self-evident, was extraordinary mainly for its elaborated visual concept and stern acting that was strongly in contrast with psychological acting prevailing not only in the Slovak theatre. Calm, even mechanical declamation coming strictly to the point and circulating in some mini-chorus culminated in a demoniac scream. Maybe it is the expression of resolution after the release from captivity of everydayness and its too obvious expectations, or the expression of anger, as the only way out, which is often very close to resignation not only to fight, but also to live. Director, and actress in one, worked systematically with her body like with a visual and spatial artefact. She didn't illustrate her inner feelings, she was moving very naturally on the stage, as if she was unconcerned about the audience at times. Somewhere in the background, we could feel the influence of German speaking drama art and its geniuses: Heiner Müller, Thomas Bernhard and Elfriede Jelinek. Actually, the whole festival was little in spirit of post dramatic theatre as a respected European teatrologist Hans-Thies Lehmann, the author of the term "post dramatic theatre", held here a lecture and a workshop.