

SUMMARY

A CONCEPT OF THEATER DIRECTOR: MILOŠ WASSERBAUER'S

LEGACY FROM 1950S AND 1960S

What started as a project in 2015 has grown into a book which explores the works of the opera director Miloš Wasserbauer (1907–1970) in the fifties and sixties of the 20th century. Traditionally, a reader will expect that a monograph dedicated to a famous person will present a probable history of their life and work in the context of époque. In this book, however, a different view of Miloš Wasserbauer's creative career is offered to the reader. The author attempts, on the one hand, to unveil how the director projected his understanding of the world onto his productions, while on the other, to trace the recipients' acceptance and evaluation of those performances. Moreover, of special interest is the way Wasserbauer's researchers re-conceptualized his work in later years. The main focus of this book is on how our ideas regarding a certain phenomenon, and thus the academic discourse around it, are influenced by the specificity, size and approach to the elements constituting this phenomenon.

Using Miloš Wasserbauer's life and work, the author tries to prove that those features are largely determined by the ephemeral nature of the theatre event itself (in case of this study mainly an opera performance). Depending on quality and extent of particular (archival) material that has been preserved, a perspective of analysis changes. Current experience of the researcher influences how he or she conceptualizes the creators themselves and earlier scholarly studies dedicated to them. Based on how the creator's conceptualization evolved, the reader together with the author will create the concept(s) of their own: in case of this book that would be the concept of opera director Miloš Wasserbauer. In a sense, the author tries to capture the way of how the artist, Miloš Wasserbauer, and his work were changing in the memory of the theater.

The book discusses Miloš Wasserbauer's theoretical work on opera theatre in the context of the approaches of his predecessors and contemporaries. The author also focuses on selected performances, which are regarded as style-forming in Wasserbauer's career and history of Brno operatic practice: *The Young Guard* (Brno, 1951), *Family of Taras* (Brno, 1952), *Juro Jánošík* (Bratislava, 1954), *Jenůfa* (Bratislava, 1955; Brno, 1961), *Don Carlos* (Bratislava, 1956), *Beg Bajazid* (Bratislava, 1957), *Dalibor* (Bratislava, 1957; Brno, 1961), *From the House of the Dead* (Brno, 1958), *Svätopluk* (Bratislava, 1960), *The Makropulos Affair* (Brno, 1962), *The Force of Destiny* (Leipzig, 1963), *Katerina Izmajlova* (Brno, Milan, 1964), *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Brno, 1965), *Julius Caesar* (Brno, 1966), *Otello* (Brno, 1967), *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček* (Brno, 1967) and some other.

The book also discusses the reception of those operas in the press of that era, focusing on how the époque influenced the expectations and assessment of the artist. The concept of "Opera director Miloš Wasserbauer" is a reference not only to a real person, but also to a number of changing opinions, ideas and images that further mediate theatrical experiences and approaches of one particular person within a certain period in theatre history. Such concepts supply us with diverse images of past events, reflection, or the way a person interacts with theatrical reality. What is more, they contribute to our perception of opera-staging of our time and its place in our lives and memories – in our multilayered and changing concept of an opera director.

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