

Greetings to the Reader

In this issue of our journal, we place the main emphasis on the sociology of theatre, which focuses on the social functioning of theatre, providing insights through studies, case studies and an interview into the role of theatre forms and their organisational frameworks in transmitting values.

One of the research groups with a strong interest in this issue, STEP (Project on European Theatre Systems), was founded in 2005 with the participation of researchers from seven European cities, explicitly representing smaller countries: Aarhus (Denmark), Bern (Switzerland), Debrecen (Hungary), Dublin (Ireland), Groningen (Netherlands), Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Tartu (Estonia). The composition of the group facilitated the use of a comparative methodological approach, assuming that different theatre systems may convey different values, which the research seeks to make visible. A highlight of STEP's events showcasing experiments in exploring cultural similarities and differences was the international symposium on the sociology of theatre organised on 29 April 2023 in the framework of the 10th Theatre Olympics at the National Theatre. In our journal, we publish the papers of some of the speakers and other experts of this academic conference with the undisguised aim to stimulate sociological research of theatre in Hungary.

Christopher Balme, Thomas Eder and James Rowson's study, *Theatre after the Covid Outbreak – Artistic Innovation or Road Addiction?* takes a mixed-methods approach to present the results of the research data and discourse analysis of the material collected in the UK, Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The authors sought to answer the question as to whether the exogenous shock of the Covid pandemic led theatres to innovate. They argue that the preliminary results point to transformations that affect both the technological and institutional dimensions of theatre, particularly in the areas of digital infrastructure and *know-how*.

Hedi-Liis Toome's paper, *How political values influence theatre*, discusses the results of an empirical study which examined the functioning of the institution—its production, distribution and reception spaces and their interrelationships—in Tartu, Estonia. The research was based on the methodology and comparative aspects developed by STEP. According to the author, although theatre systems always stem from cultural roots and the structure of a theatre system has

a direct impact on how theatre works, the theatre experiences of audiences in the countries studied tend to be similar rather than different, despite the fact that their theatre systems differ.

Antine Zijlstra and Berber Aardema's case study, titled *Social and community value creation in small Dutch villages through the example of the Frisian-language performance of Anne Frank's Diary*, explores how the members of Frisian and Dutch audiences in the villages of Toppenhuizen and Twellingea value amateur theatre events in Frisian and how they contribute to community life. The play was staged in late April and early May 2022. Friesland is one of twelve provinces in the Netherlands and Frisian is an official minority language, used mainly orally and in family circles, but is also present in rural social life and in the regional media, although the education system offers few opportunities to learn it.

Natália Gleason-Nagy's case study *Connectivity is calling us in* explores the socially distributed and embodied cognition through the audience relations of theatre inspired by the Woolly Mammoth Theatre in Washington, D.C. In her article, the author aims to inspire the proven and experimental tools of audience experience and community events through an international case study. The paper offers our readers an insight into the work of the Connectivity Department in the hope of providing new perspectives on the role and possibilities of cultural management in the pursuit of public benefit, which also provides the audience with opportunities for more active community inclusion.

Among those working in the field of theatre studies, *Quirijn Lennert van den Hoogen*, a researcher at the University of Groningen, has been instrumental in developing a theoretical conceptual framework that has helped to define how to investigate theatre far more sociologically. **Szofia Tölli's** interview with Van den Hoogen, titled *Cabaret and Beyond*, offers insights into aspects of Dutch art politics and sociology of art, as well as the experience gained from the STEP City project and the interviewee's individual research into the sociology of theatre.

Enikő Sepsi, in her study *The Weilian Concept of Attention and János Pilinszky's "autobiographies,"* analyses the aspects of the daily practice of attention and of the creative imagination that recognise necessary events, relations and, in general, necessity in the Weilian sense ("*nécessité*")—and that thereby create reality—on the basis of Simone Weil's fragmentary oeuvre, the reconstruction attempt published in 2021, and the volume collected under the title *János Pilinszky's Önéletrajzaim* (My Autobiographies). The study demonstrates that, in addition to the Weilian concept of attention, Pilinszky was familiar with

the Weilian connections between “necessity” (“*nécessité*”), misfortune (“*malheur*”) and love, as evidenced by the markings on his copy of *Intuitions pré-chrétiennes* in the legacy, and that these connections are also to be found in the draft volume *Önéletrajzaim*.

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