

## OPPONENT'S REVIEW OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

Author: Evangelos Lalos

Title: Directing for Devised Theatre (*From practice, to theory, to practice again*)

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Opponent: MgA. Hana Malaníková, Ph.D.

The work entitled **Directing for Devised Theatre (*From practice, to theory, to practice again*)** presents a thorough reflection of author's experiences with being a director in different projects based on Devised Theatre. A dutiful description of author's own personal journey is complemented by theories on Devised Theatre, Collaborative Creation and theatre direction. The whole thesis contains six chapters, including the introduction and epilogue.

In the **introduction**, the author tells us about his very first encounter with the dramatic culture (a huge blue medusa coming towards his seat in the National Theatre of Rhodes), about his passion for home-made performances in childhood and about his multiple participation in school theater projects during the teenage years. The first chapter ends in Copenhagen in 2009, where Evangelos becomes a member of a theatre group named "TeArt". As he writes, "TeArt became a big part of my young adult life and a milestone in my journey as a theatre artist. Apart from finding 'my place' in a foreign country, I also felt I had found 'my place' in theatre." I appreciate this personal biography at the beginning of the whole work. This is in line with the best tradition of diploma thesis at KATaP and it helps the readers to understand better the author's background.

The second chapter is devoted to **theory of Devised Theatre** - definition of the basic terms, comparison of Devised and Collaborative Theatre, description of the creation process and the role of the director in DT. I find this part clear, comprehensible and reasonable extensive.

In the third chapter named **From practice** the author describes a four-year experience in the Danish theater group "TeArt". We can witness his first attempt at directing a devising play, quite unsuccessful one. Then the creation of two great performances, which he directed together with two other colleagues from TeArt. And finally the author's decision to leave the group and to accept a new life challenge: go to study a theatre school. "To study theatre was not only a professional move; it was a life dream that I have been postponing for some time." The links to theoretical sources are used very organically. But the most valuable in this part is the openness and sincerity with which the author reflects the reasons for his first failures. This is one of the most interesting and fruitful discoveries in the whole work.

The fourth chapter **To Theory** contains reflection and evaluation of three different learning experiences: study of the Authorial Acting Masters degree program at the Theatre Faculty in Prague, the summer internship in the State Theatre of Cyprus and the Erasmus exchange at the Royal School of Performing Arts in Madrid. The author searches for answers to the following questions: What did I learn from my studies in Prague and Madrid as well my internship in Cyprus, and how can I implement it in my future work? Unfortunately, there is a lack of more detailed and more specific description of what and how the author studied in these institutions. It is precisely this knowledge that I consider to be very valuable and interesting, among other things because the author expresses in the work his concerns about the meaningfulness of institutionalized education: What could a theatre school, with specific and often closed ideas about art, teach me better than practice could? That's a very provocative question and it is a pity we only get quite general and simplified answer.

In the fifth chapter entitled **To practice again** the author considers whether the acquired experience has somehow changed the way of his work on the current devising project. And again – when he writes “For me personally this is the project I have worked the best so far, putting into practice all the acquired knowledge from schools and previous experiences.”, I would welcome more concrete examples of how the school helped him in practice.

The last chapter is the **Epilogue**. The author summarizes his findings into the idea that “Authorial Theatre is more or less synonymous to Devised Theatre as both have the characteristics of a creation based on personal interest, implying a creative process open to change, therefore making the process itself more valuable than the result.” This is definitely this kind of claim that encourages a profitable discussion defining the concept of Authorial Theatre.

Overall, the work is well written and structured, clear and formally correct. The author demonstrates his ability to communicate his personal experiences and place them in the appropriate theoretical framework.

I have one additional question for discussion:

If we will focus on our common experiences from lessons of Authorial Acting (during your second year at KATaP) and consider it from a pedagogical point of view, which principles or methods from Devised Theatre could be applicable (useful, inspiring) and where do you see substantial differences? Please compare the role of teacher and director.

Based on the reasons above, I warmly recommend this work for defense.

In Husinec September 23, 2018.

Hana Malaníková, opponent