

Preface

What is contemporary European theatre like? In recent years, it has been sceptically believed that big personalities or grand themes have vanished. There is too much mediocrity and there are no personalities of the 20th century calibre who would have the power to move the theatre forward, to expand its forms and styles and to establish ingenious schools that would create new space for experimenting. And, above all, to shape a theatre responsive to the needs of our time. Modern theatre should also take an active part in a value-based discourse, bring up current themes that reverberate in unison with Man of our time, which is particularly complex and full of conflicts. Society needs such kind of theatre and we have it. But, can we recognize it?

The conference focus was on the analysis of values represented by contemporary drama in recent decades and their connection with the newly-conceived values of a society of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. There is a need to define the state of theatre and its capacity to express, through artistic means, the theme of Man and his or her role in modern society, to explore to what extent theatre can fulfil its mission, from social, ethical or philosophical points of view, to be the stage of the world and to mirror Man's soul.

The objective of the proceedings was to present papers on theatre ensembles and theatre personalities who pose life-provoking themes in the world of conflicts. Each domestic or foreign speaker was invited to present an original example and through a kaleidoscope of papers the conference participants had the opportunity to observe what contemporary theatre is like, what personalities, ensembles or themes it offers. New emerging initiatives are expected to be inspirational. On the other hand, this also applies to older theatre and drama personalities, highly respected names, art streams, schools that have been around for many years or that re-emerge to join in the discourse with the generations of theatre professionals.

The main conference thematic areas were Theatre personalities and modern theatre, The value message of the older personalities of theatre and

drama for contemporary drama creation, Theatre acting as a support for or destruction of values, Art theatre and/or opinion theatre, Theatre language as a quest for a paragon.

What can be the message to the future? Between 1987 and 2018, in Taormina for the first time and most recently in St. Petersburg, the Europe Theatre Prize was awarded. The main prize was awarded to the most esteemed personalities of European theatre and also The Europe Prize New Theatrical Realities went to tens of theatre professionals who contributed to the creation of theatre arts on the verge of millennia. Currently, for lack of funding, the event has come to a halt. Should it be renewed, will we be able to name the inspirational processes which contribute to making headway in our theatre? In European theatre? It is expected that also our conference will give answers to the questions, be to a modest extent.

Editor