

## ABSTRACTS

Veronka Örsike Asztalos

■ **Two of Bjørnson's Dramas (*The Bankrupt* and *Leonarda*) on the Hungarian Stages of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Keywords: *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson*, *The Bankrupt*, *Leonarda*, *Hungarian reception*, 19<sup>th</sup> century

Compared to Henrik Ibsen, the works of his contemporary, playwright Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, remain largely unknown in Hungary. However, understanding Ibsen's success in Hungary necessitates an examination of Bjørnson's reception as well. Two of Bjørnson's plays, *The Bankrupt* and *Leonarda*, were performed at the National Theatre in Budapest during the 1870s – more than a decade before Ibsen's plays gained popularity in the region. This paper argues that these early performances, based on now-obscure translations, are significant for several reasons: (1) They illustrate how these stagings laid the groundwork for the later reception of Ibsen's works. (2) They provide insights into how Bjørnson's texts and their theatrical interpretations influenced Hungarian discussions on modern drama. (3) They underscore the roles of both Bjørnson and Ibsen as key figures in establishing a distinctly “Norwegian drama” at the turn of the century.

Katalin Ágnes Bartha

■ **The *Young Barbarians* as a Reimagining of Contemporary Tragedy (A New Theatrical Perspective on *Oeuvres*)**

Keywords: *Young Barbarians*, *Bartók*, *Kodály*, *memory*, *history*, *performance*, *written culture*, *contemporary theater*

*Young Barbarians* (2022), a successful theatrical production by the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj, Romania, is set against the backdrop of the socio-political tragedies that shaped Central and Eastern Europe in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Inspired by the lives of Hungarian composers and ethnomusicologists Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, this study examines how *Young Barbarians* provides an effective model for rethinking contemporary tragedy in performance. The analysis focuses on the interplay of various compositional elements, both in their sources and effects: the scenic presence of actors, dancers, choir, and musicians; ethnographic practices tied to the collection of folk music among diverse ethnic groups; and subsequent cultural phenomena, such as the Hungarian dance house movement, which serves as both a revival and a living tradition. The study

further explores the dynamic interaction between embodied culture – manifested in the performers' acting – and written culture, represented by the textual materials informing the performance. Given the multilayered contextuality of the production, the research also addresses how the play mediates specific stages of crisis within the multilingual, multi-ethnic regional setting.

Csaba Boros

■ **The *Aesthetic-Philosophical Attributes of Dance Dramaturgy: A Social Game with Remnants of Sound and Movement***

Keywords: *philosophy of art*, *play*, *dance*, *dance dramaturgy*, *music aesthetics*, *NDT*, *Petit Mort*, *Kammerballett*

The joy of play permeates universal human culture. However, when observing the cultural habits and value dynamics that have become identities in posthuman and postcolonial societies, many may feel a sense of absence upon hearing this statement. Our well-worn concepts often face obstacles, and the notion of play is no exception. Consider, for example, play as competition, manifesting in conflict and defeating others, versus play as sacred action (play), which entails acts of representation, revelation, sharing, and participation. Johan Huizinga's seminal *Homo Ludens* offers inspiring insights into the unique and extraordinary qualities of play, proposing the surprising paradox that play becomes part of culture only through its seriousness. In this study, I explore the concept of play through the aesthetic diagnoses of music and dance dramaturgy. Delving into fragments of emblematic dance works from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, I aim to outline new perspectives on the social and aesthetic roles of play, presenting it as a caesura among the aesthetic-philosophical attributes of contemporary dance dramaturgy.

Imola Csizmadia

■ ***Being Observed: Panoptic Modes of a Site-Specific Theatrical Space***

Keywords: *site-specific theater*, *panopticism*, *theatrical spatiality*, *audience experience*, *spectatorship*, *participation in theater*, *immersive performance*, *spatial dynamics in theater*

The fact that theater engages with space in a tangible, “straightforward” manner – eschewing the dominance of formality, constructedness, or fixed design – offers the audience an entirely different, more immersive experience of space. From the broader context of my study, it becomes evident that the relationship between the

viewer/receiver and the performance can be understood as a multi-faceted system. The experience evoked by site-specific performances can be characterized as a “hybrid existence”, confronting the audience with a duality: these performances disrupt habitual modes of perception by simultaneously offering the positions of spectator and participant. While traditional practices typically establish a distanced relationship between the viewer and the performance, site-specific spatial practices, wherein viewers can assert their “presence”, foster a more immediate and dynamic connection. The Cartesian worldview – idealized for centuries and enduring due to its privileged status – has left us deeply embedded in its paradigm, causing an over-identification with the quest for “being-in-the-world” (Martin Heidegger), or more specifically, “being-in-the-artwork”. We yearn for a space that can compensate for this “loss of proportion”, a functional space organized around principles that permit shifting perceptions, physical closeness, materiality, and direct experience – a space where we can fully be present as human beings. Until now, we have been relegated to the role of objective observers, external to the experience.

**Kata Demeter**

■ ***The Evolution of Modern Scenography Amid Paradigm Shifts in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries***

Keywords: *scenography, theatrical space, evolution, paradigm shifts, interdisciplinarity*

The evolution of modern scenography has undergone profound transformations, evolving from the painted backdrops of ancient theater to the immersive digital and virtual environments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Over time, the interpretation of theatrical space has expanded significantly, transitioning from two-dimensional representations to dynamic, three-dimensional creations. Pioneering figures such as Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig revolutionized the field by introducing symbolic and abstract stage designs and leveraging light as a critical dramaturgical element to enhance spatial and narrative expression. These innovations were later shaped by pivotal intellectual shifts, including the linguistic, performative, topographical, and visual turns, which redefined theater’s visual language and underscored the growing complexity of scenography. In the context of postdramatic theater, scenography challenged traditional narrative structures, prioritizing spatiality, visuality, and audience interaction, and

fostering experimental approaches. The integration of digital technologies and multimedia tools has further expanded its expressive capacities, offering new possibilities for designing and experiencing theatrical productions. Consequently, contemporary scenography transcends the mere construction of physical theatrical spaces. It has become a dynamic, interdisciplinary practice, harmonizing visual and acoustic elements to create immersive and transformative audience experiences that reflect the complexity and innovation of modern theater.

**Magdolna Jákfalvi**

■ ***Treatise on Dramaturgy: Action***

Keywords: *dramaturgy, action, theatrical tradition, classical unities, Chekhov, Uncle Vanya, dramatic analysis*

This study forms part of a broader series of analyses examining the principles of dramaturgy and theatrical traditions that shape the interpretation of drama and the understanding of dramatic texts. It focuses on action, the most enduring element of the classical unities, and analyzes Chekhov’s play *Uncle Vanya* – often described as being “without action” – through close reading and dramaturgical methodologies.

**Árpád Kékesi Kun**

■ ***Questions of Dramaturgy and Directing in the World Premiere of Key Seekers in Szolnok***

Keywords: *István Örkény, Key Seekers, dramaturgy, directing, Szigligeti Theatre, Szolnok, premiere, Hungarian theater*

Fifty years ago, István Örkény’s *Kulcskeresők* (Key Seekers), an atypical allegory embedded in a farce, took shape with the effective assistance of Gábor Székely, chief director and manager of the Szigligeti Theatre in Szolnok. However, it did not reach its final form, as the author revised the play again after its world premiere. Before the reading rehearsal in Szolnok, six or seven versions of the play were prepared. Székely believed that “Örkény could express great things in the second act”, but “the first act was more of a separate play than a preparation for the next one”. As a result, the director requested multiple modifications from the author. The version of the text, reshaped several times by Örkény and staged in Szolnok, was published in the December 1975 issue of the journal *Korunk*. However, before the play’s next premiere at the National Theatre in Budapest in January 1977, Örkény revised the first act again, still dissatisfied with its beginning.

(Nonetheless, in the three-volume collection of his plays published in 1982, the version staged at the Szigligeti Theatre was included.) My study examines the dramaturgical and staging characteristics of the 1975 Szolnok production, highlighting the differing approaches of contemporary reception.

**Róbert Csaba Szabó**

■ *New Heroes in the Dramatic Texts of Művelődési Útmutató: Sándor Petőfi as a Historical Hero*

Keywords: Sándor Petőfi, *Művelődési Útmutató*, Hungarian theater history, amateur theater, cultural memory, state ideology, Romanian cultural policy, Stalinist era

This study explores the 1948 dramatic work published in *Művelődési Útmutató* and its adaptations, focusing on the state's role in shaping theatrical memory through state-approved texts. During this period, amateur theater in Romania flourished, with nearly 4,000 cultural centers producing over 20,000 performances by 1949, reflecting the ideological goals of the regime. Unlike pre-war amateur theater, post-war cultural houses disseminated Party ideology, transforming theater into a tool for shaping cultural memory. By examining texts and performances from 1948 to 1953, this research highlights how the state canonized a new pantheon of heroes to align historical narratives with its ideological agenda.

**Andrea Tompa**

■ *"I Am to Be Considered Jewish": The Exemption Documents of Jenő Janovics*

Keywords: Jenő Janovics, exemption documents, Hungarian theater history, Northern Transylvania, German occupation, historical memory, archival studies

Jenő Janovics, the former director of the National Theater in Cluj and its legal successor, sought to reclaim a leadership role in 1940 following the reintegration of Northern Transylvania into Hungary. However, he quickly found himself compelled to prove his exemption from the so-called Jewish laws. This paper examines the extensive archival documentation in which this renowned theater professional and film producer was forced to demonstrate his integrity, national loyalty, ancestry, artistic achievements, and evidence of his unwavering Hungarian sentiments. By analyzing exemption requests, letters, and related submissions, the study contextualizes the systemic marginalization Janovics endured, which included being progressively excluded from public life, erased from museum and theater historiography, relegated to publishing under pseudonyms, and ultimately expelled from professional associations. The narrative culminates in the dramatic events of spring 1944, when Janovics was forced to flee Cluj during the German occupation. The paper further explores his survival in Budapest and sheds light on the fate of his siblings during this tumultuous period.



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## SZÁMUNK SZERZŐI

A lapszámot szerkesztette:  
**Rigán Lóránd**

**Asztalos Veronka Őrsike** [1996] – doktorandus, SZTE Irodalom- és Kultúratudományi Doktori Iskola; tudományos segédmunkatárs, Marosvásárhelyi Művészeti Egyetem Színház és Multimédia Kutatóintézet, Marosvásárhely  
**Balázs Imre József** [1976] – irodalomtörténész, PhD, egyetemi docens, BBTE Magyar Irodalomtudományi Intézet; főszerkesztő-helyettes, Korunk, Kolozsvár  
**Bartha Katalin Ágnes** [1978] – színház-történész, egyetemi docens, BBTE Magyar Színházi Intézet, Kolozsvár  
**Boros Csaba** [1989] – zeneszerző, PhD, egyetemi adjunktus, Marosvásárhelyi Művészeti Egyetem Zene Intézet  
**Csapody Miklós** [1955] – irodalomtörténész, PhD, Budapest  
**Csehy Zoltán** [1973] – költő, műfordító, irodalomtörténész, egyetemi docens, Comenius Egyetem, Pozsony  
**Csizmádia Imola** [1984] – teatrológus, dízlet- és látványtervező, PhD, Marosvásárhelyi Művészeti Egyetem Színházi Intézet  
**Demeter Kata** [1989] – teatrológus, doktorandus, BBTE, Kolozsvár  
**Hermann Róbert** [1963] – történész, az MTA doktora, egyetemi tanár, KRE BTK, Budapest  
**Jákfalvi Magdolna** [1969] – színház-történész, a Theatron alapító szerkesztője, egyetemi tanár, PTE BTK  
**Kamarás István OJD** [1941] – az MTA doktora, magyartanár, könyvtáros, szociológus, Budapest  
**Kékési Kun Árpád** [1972] – színház-történész, egyetemi tanár, Marosvásárhelyi Művészeti Egyetem Doktori Iskola; KRE Színházstudományi Tanszék, Budapest  
**Réti Róbert Roland** [1999] – festőművész, grafikus, Nagykároly  
**Szabó Róbert Csaba** [1981] – író, szerkesztő, látó, egyetemi oktató, Marosvásárhelyi Művészeti Egyetem Színház, Vizualis Művészetek és Média Intézet  
**Tompa Andrea** [1971] – író, egyetemi docens, BBTE Magyar Színházi Intézet, Kolozsvár

## TÁMOGATÓK



„A testek szabadsága a színpadon, ugyanúgy, ahogyan az ujjak szabadsága a kleviatúrán, óriási áldozattal jár. A teljes önfeladással – mondhatni. Ennek a szabadságnak ára van, az önelveztetés, az önfeláldozás szabadságát, nem pedig az anarchiáét. Az életünk kívül marad, és csak a belső én [Selbst] lépheti át a játék (a szent-cselekvés) ovális körét.”

[Boros Csaba]

ISSN 1222 8338



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