

II. RECENZJE

Mátyás Horányi, *THE MAGNIFICENCE OF ESZTERHÁZA*, 1962. 260 pp. 88 illustrations, 17×24 cm. Coedition of Akadémiai Kiadó (Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Budapest and Barrie & Rockliff, London.

Up to comparatively recent times the two decades between 1770 and 1790, i. e. the years when the first German theatrical ensembles appeared in the country, were regarded as the beginnings of theatrical life in Hungary. The existing few traces of ancient, pagan ritual plays were mostly disregarded, and still less attention was paid to those mediaeval church dramas which, imported from the West, had come into usage in the country. Neither the humanistic plays during the reign of Matthias I („Corvinus”) nor the Calvinist-Papist disputes of the 16th century, reminiscent of English interludes, were regarded as forerunners of the histrionic art of a later period, because all such antecedents and beginnings were suddenly cut off and brought to a standstill by the Turkish conquest of the country, which entailed foreign rule and almost complete paralysis of Hungary's national life for a century and a half.

Yet, continuity of theatrical life was not completely broken up during the long crisis. Primitive forms of the histrionic art survived in the castles and ducal courts of Transylvania and Upper Hungary; the fairs, inns and manor houses were continuously attended or visited by buffoons, acrobats, bearleaders, wandering minstrels, while the performance of classic or religious dialogues and dramas became more and more frequent in the con-

vent schools and the great protestant colleges. Without these native dramatic traditions it would have been impossible for German histrionic art, whose representatives invaded Hungary about 1780, to strike root so firmly and so rapidly, and — subsequently — it would have been impossible for Hungarian theatricals to replace German dramas and German theatrical life so completely and so richly.

Mr. Horányi's recently published work is especially significant for the reason that — by describing the theatrical activities of the aristocrats in the 18th century, or rather those of the Princes Esterházy — it points to a hitherto mostly disregarded and withal very important link between the traditional naive dramatic form and the new worldly theater and shows at the same time how this new theatrical life was transplanted from Germany, its birthplace, to Hungary.

We learn from the book that the members of the Esterházy family took part in the dramatic performances of the nearby Jesuit colleges in the course of the 17th century already: as actors in their youth, and as advisers and patrons in later life. It is quite possible that the play-acting students of the Jesuits found sometimes admittance to the stage of the princely palace, and it is established that popular musical plays were performed there during the Christmas and Easter holidays. Dramatic elements began to manifest themselves in the frame of those baroque and sumptuous pageants which had come to replace the crude popular entertainments of yore; it was in the frame of such court festivities — diversified by equestrian feats, fire works, concerts and dancing — that the first operas

written by Haydn in Hungary were staged in 1762. The repertoire of the first strolling players to visit Kismarton and Eszterháza consisted, in the main, of primitive popular burlesques, acrobatic feats, dances and songs, and it was the solemn atmosphere and the awe-inspiring dignity of the princely court (rather than the exigencies of the still fairly unpretentious urban audiences) which prompted this or that theatrical troupe to raise the level of its productions and to bring also more serious and longer plays to the stage. But even if the stay at the princely court failed to improve the taste and the repertoire of the visiting theatrical ensembles, the sojourn at Kismarton or Eszterháza rendered invaluable services to both the actors themselves and — indirectly — to Hungarian theatrical life in general as the troupes found engagement for many months and were amply rewarded so that their stay at the princely court over, they were materially, physically and spiritually well equipped for their further tours leading them inland, towards remote towns of the country.

Kismarton and Eszterháza, the two princely residences, as mediators of theatrical life, were unknown to science until the appearance of Mr. Horányi's book. It is due to his patient and persistent researches in different archives that light has been shed on a highly interesting province of the theatrical world, the teeming life of which was so long hidden from historians.

The work under review supplies well authenticated evidence that it was not occasionally, once or twice, but regularly, day by day, over years, nay, over a number of decades, that operas and prose dramas, plays and comedies were performed at the residence of the Princes Esterházy. It was not merely in the frame of occasional guest performances of a few prominent artists that the members of the princely family and their illustrious guests amused themselves: the Esterházys maintained a theatrical ensemble of their own during half a century (from 1760 to 1810), and nearly all products of contemporary operatic and dramatic literature were performed in their palaces during this time. We learn from the book that the

theatres at Eszterháza and Kismarton were, as regards pomp and luxury, equal to the most exquisite ducal and municipal theatres of the age, and that ensembles which played subsequently at Pozsony, Pest and other Hungarian towns had often appeared first at the princely court and used its stage as a sort of stepping stone to their further career in Hungary. In short, both Eszterháza and Kismarton were important centres of Hungarian theatrical life in the second half of the 18th century, imparting their stimulating effect to all parts of the country. To have demonstrated this fact, and to have done it in a highly entertaining and instructive manner is the chief merit of Mr. Horányi's work.

There are many additional features that enhance the value of the book. For instance, the author has succeeded in reconstructing the annual repertoires of the princely opera companies and the prose ensembles; relying on the evidence of rediscovered ground plans and descriptions, Mr. Horányi presents an exhaustive history of the construction of the Eszterháza theatre; he has, moreover, brought to light the plans concerning the reconstruction of the princely theatre at Kismarton; he has discovered a number of valuable stage designs including the drawings of Pietro Travaglia (these were the first stage designs made in Hungary), and Carl Maurer's scenery for the *Zauberflöte* (*Magic Flute*). The book contributes important data to the biography of famous artists, for instance to that of Girolamo Bon of European repute; the author has found a number of hitherto unknown librettos from the 18th century, and so forth.

Mr. Horányi's book seems to have given the impetus to an exploration of the history of several other aristocratic theatres so that a very interesting pattern of interactions between these private theatres and the different urban theatres, a hitherto unknown aspect of Hungary's theatrical life, is unfolding at present. More and more threads are disentangled throwing light on the interwoven connections of the Hungarian theatre with that of the general pattern of European culture. Research workers in other countries may feel encouraged by Mr. Horányi's initiative, the more so as

the history of theatres in the courts of feudal landlords has been a rather virgin field of general theatrical history not only in Hungary but abroad as well.

The book under review contains a rich material of illustrations including many pictures the originals of which have been discovered by the author and are now published for the first time. The beautifully executed illustrations have greatly contributed to the well-merited success of the book which — after the Hungarian original and the subsequent German version — has now been translated into English.

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ЛИТЕРАТУРА И СОВРЕМЕННОСТЬ.
Сборник статей. Статьи о литературе
1960—1961 годов, Москва 1961, ss. 414.

Literatura i współczesność to tytuł tomu, w którego skład wchodzi artykuły krytyczne i teoretycznoliterackie, ogłoszone w latach 1960—1961 w różnych czasopismach radzieckich. Niektóre z nich zostały specjalnie dla tego zbioru na nowo opracowane i uzupełnione. Tematyka ich dotyczy zagadnień stosunku współczesnej literatury i jej twórców do rzeczywistości, wzajemne przenikanie się sztuki i czasów, w których ona powstaje. Wstępnie zaznaczono, że publikacja ta ukazuje się w niezwykłym dla narodu radzieckiego okresie — po XXII Zjeździe Partii. Artykuł N. S. Chruszczowa *Ku nowym osiągnięciom literatury i sztuki*, stawiający przed pracownikami sztuki zadanie wychowania człowieka komunizmu, określa charakter wydawnictwa. „Zbiór ma odzwierciedlić jedność radzieckiej krytyki literackiej w walce o nowe osiągnięcia literatury” — jedność celu, albowiem w sprawie środków doń prowadzących autorzy częstokroć polemizują.

Całość podzielona jest na cztery rozdziały. Dwa pierwsze obejmują artykuły dotyczące problemów ogólnych, jakie stawia współczesność przed literaturą. Trzeci i czwarty poświęcone są analizie poszczególnych utworów najnowszej literatury radzieckiej.

Zawartość I rozdziału: W. Pankow, *Aktywny człowiek*; T. Trifonowa, *Dla człowieka i człowieczeństwa*; N. Giej, W. Pisku-

now, *Humanizm abstrakcyjny i humanizm socjalistyczny*; N. Szamota, *Pełnią sił duszy*; L. Nowiczenko, *Z wydarzeń roku 1960*. Rozdział II: S. Antonow, *Materiał, idea, forma*; N. Korżawin, *W obronie prawd banalnych*; R. Bikmuchamietow, *Źródła i rzeki*; W. Iwanow, *Współczesność i nowatorstwo artystyczne*. Rozdział III: A. Dymyszcz, *Poeta i czasy (O poemacie Twardowskiego Za dalą — dal)*; I. Grinberg, *Oddziaływanie słowem (o Zaproszeniu do podróży A. Prokofiewa)*; A. Kriwicki, *Z serca (o Lodowej księdze J. Smuła)*; G. Pomierancewa, *Triumf życia i miłości (o powieściach M. Stelmacha)*. Rozdział IV: I. Kozłow, *Znajomość z Balujewem (o powieści W. Kożewnikowa)*; W. Czałmajew, *Uratowany uśmiech (o powieściach S. Sartakowa Gornyj wietier i Nie oddawaj korolewu)*; W. Łakszin, *Spór z przestarzałą mądrością (o powieściach i opowiadaniach F. Abramowa)*; A. Siniawski, *Poezja i proza Olgi Berggolc*.

Artykuły zamieszczone w rozdziale I nurtuje podstawowe zagadnienie: jakim powinien być bohater utworu literackiego, aby jak najdobitniej odzwierciedlił psychikę współczesnego człowieka radzieckiego. Jest ono również punktem wyjściowym rozważań autorów rozprawy *Humanizm abstrakcyjny i humanizm socjalistyczny*. Twierdzą oni, że spór o bohatera literatury jest nierozłącznie związany z problemem nowego człowieka, jego miejscem w życiu, jego pojęciem szczęścia. W związku z tym rozróżniają dwie zasadnicze postawy: humanistyczną — biorącą w obronę człowieka i jego prawo do szczęścia, oraz antyhumanistyczną, wrogą człowiekowi. Tę ostatnią reprezentują ideologie obozu kapitalistycznego. Autorzy zaliczają tu przede wszystkim: humanizm ekonomiczny (samotna jednostka walcząca o swe osobiste, ale osiągalne szczęście) i egzystencjalizm (samotny, bezradny indywidualista, przekonany, że zło płynie z niedoskonałości natury ludzkiej, której nie da się zmienić). Przedstawiciele tych kierunków zgodni są w dyskredytowaniu idei rewolucyjnego przekształcenia świata. Po przeciwnej stronie znajdują się: humanizm abstrakcyjny, którego wyrazicielami są pisarze realiści, i humanizm socjalistyczny, znajdujący swe odbicie w twórczości