

Doctoral dissertation by Joanna Koc

Summary

An actor in the process of educating young viewers. The work on two parts in the plays *The Beast* by Malina Przesługa and *A Marriage Proposal* by Antoni Chekhov.

In my doctoral dissertation, I address three main aspects of the topic. The first part covers the descriptions and analyses of the artistic work, which include roles in two separate plays: a musical about the youth titled *The Beast* by Malina Przesługa (dir. Przemysław Jaszczak) as well as *A Marriage Proposal* by Antoni Chekhov (dir. Juliusz Dzienikiewicz). The second part includes an attempt to characterize the young viewer as the one who is the most valuable for the creators of the theatre and culture in general. Thirdly, the dissertation also attempts to describe the role the actor plays in the process of educating young viewers.

The sum of my experience of working as a professional theatre actress as well as in pedagogy has allowed me to draw conclusions that led me to the following theses I propose and argue in favour of in my doctoral dissertation:

- The theatre of the young viewer is a condition for the existence of public theatre.
- The actor and his performances have a significant impact on the process of educating young members of the audience. The role of the actor is not limited to the duration of the performance but has a far-reaching effect.
- A theatre performance is an attractive cultural offer for young people. It is a responsibility of the creators of the theatre to fill the repertoire gap, understood as the plays aimed at the youth.
- Classic plays are valuable for and attractive to the youth.

In my dissertation I put an equal weight of importance to the roles I create as an actress and the viewer to whom they are directed. That is why the prelude to the description of the artistic work is the characteristics of the young viewer to whom I give a closer look in my dissertation. I also present the results of the surveys and analyses that I conducted during my classes with young people, conversations which took place after performances and conclusions made while participating as jury member at youth and children's theatre competitions. The conclusions related to the teaching include didactic work with students at The Vocal and Acting Department at The Academy of Music in Lodz, didactic work with students at The Acting Department of the PWSFTViT in Lodz, as well as assisting in acting classes led by Dr. Anna Sarna-Śniecikowska.

In the following part I move on to the description of the artistic work and work on the roles of Kitty in the spectacle *The Beast* by Malina Przesługa and Natalia Stepanovna in the performance of *A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekhov.

The role of Kitty and her presence in the content of art is strongly conditioned by the environment in which she finds herself, in this case it is the class community (microcosm). The spectacle shows the collective mechanisms that may emerge in the school environment. The performance touches on,

inter alia, cyberbullying, hate, tolerance, hiding your sensitivity behind a 'mask'. It is a musical performance. It is kept in bitter-sweet musical convention, which is a parody of American hits for teenagers in the style of a 'high school musical'. It is a collective creation. The performance is strictly directed to and speaks of the youth.

The role of Natalya Stepanovna is based on the classic one-act play of Antoni Chekhov, a text connecting generations, liked by viewers of all ages. *A Marriage Proposal* is a comedy of characters that gives the actor's material to create full-blooded characters, which I attempt to prove by describing the work on the role of Natalya Stepanovna. Natalia's role is important in my professional career path as it allowed me to develop professionally and explore various aspects of acting.

Describing both artistic works, I do not dismiss the reactions and feedback from the viewers who shared opinions with me right after seeing the performance or during the thematic workshops organised after the performance.

In the following chapters I describe acting techniques and methods that were helpful in building both parts. I particularly focus on the Sanford Meisner's acting technique and improvisation.

The end part of the dissertation is a summary of all the comments and conclusions contained in the individual chapters. It confirms the theses made and re-references the young viewer and the role of acting and the theatre in the process of educating young viewers. For the kind of young viewers we bring up, the kind of adult recipients of culture we will have.