

THEATRUM

The non-profit organisation Studio THEATRUM was founded 8 December 1994 by the theatre students and professors of the Estonian Institute of Humanities (Lembit Peterson, Juhan Viiding) and the participants of the theatre programme of the *Collegium Educationis Revaliae* to prepare and initiate a theatre-school with the main goals to:

... support and carry on the creative and methodological aspirations in acting and directing techniques of the important theatre figures of this century, and with this help to find comprehensible means and performing patterns to perform classical dramatic art and to transmit the values in it to the today's spectator

...research and creatively develop further the early Western theatre tradition, connecting it with what is valuable and comprehensible in the theatre tradition of the whole world, trying to find the deeper intercultural relations

...to work and carry out the substantial programme of the Early Music and Theatre Centre in the former Dominican St. Catherine's monastery complex in collaboration with the Dominican Order

... connect the professional theatre work and teaching the basics of dramatic art with acquiring general and higher education on the basis of Collegium Educationis Revaliae and the Estonian Institute of Humanities

... organise performances, seminars, out of school programme lectures, courses, festivals and other events concerning theatre

The head and artistic director of THEATRUM is Lembit Peterson.

THEATRUM has a 80-seat theatre hall with adjoining rooms on the 3rd floor of the former Dominican Monastery storehouse (14, Vene Street). The activities can be spread to the whole territory of the historical monastery complex (the St. Catherine's Church, the yard and rooms of the monastery), which forms an attractive environment for theatre and music events.

The whole project has been supported by the Estonian Ministry of Culture, the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, Tallinn Culture Department, Open Estonia Foundation, Estonian National Culture Foundation and several companies

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Productions:

Mirage of Love (Armastuse mirage)

A selection of works by Chekhov and others.

Supervised by Olga Mayevskaja, Juhan Viiding, Lembit Peterson

Designed by Mae Kivilo

première on February 3rd, 1995, in the Old Town Music House of Tallinn.

A 12th-century semi-liturgical drama

Jeu d'Adam

Directed by Lembit Peterson, Marius Peterson

Designed by Mae Kivilo

Performed by Andri Luup (Adam), Anneli Tuulik (Eve), Lembit Peterson (Figura), Aleksander Eelmaa (Diabolus), Eeva Eensaar (Angel)

Kärt Johanson, Mart Johanson, Anne Kuusik, Thea Luik, Maria Peterson, Marius Peterson, Leino Rei, Marian Rütman, Reet Urbsoo, Kadri Hunt, Taniel Kirikal, Taivo Niitvägi

première on June 3rd, 1995, in the ruins of St. Catherine's Church

Hugo Raudsepp

Blessing of a Demented Mind (Põrunud aru õnnistus)

Directed by Tõnis Rätsep

Designed by Ott Rätsep

Performed by Mart Aas, Kärt Johanson, Anne Kuusik, Thea Luik, Andri Luup, Marius Peterson, Leino Rei, Marian Rütman, Anneli Tuulik

première on December 20th and 21st, 1995, in THEATRUM.

Songs

Kristjan Jaak Peterson's poems, dialogues and theological sentences

Supervised by Lembit Peterson

Participants: Mart Aas, Kärt Johanson, Anne Kuusik, Thea Luik, Andri Luup, Marius Peterson, Leino Rei, Marian Rütman, Anneli Tuulik

Pushkin
Little Tragedies (Väikesed tragöödiad)

A graduation production

Directed by Lembit Peterson
Designed by Lilja Blumenfeld
Lighting by Ingo Raudkivi
Sound by Marius Peterson

Performed by Mart Aas, Kärt Johanson, Mart Johanson, Helvin Kaljula, Anne Kuusik, Thea Luik, Andri Luup, Marius Peterson, Vahur-Paul Põldma, Leino Rei, Marian Rütman, Donald Tomberg, Kristo Toots, Anneli Tuulik, Juhan Ulfsak

première on March 14th and 15th, 1997, in THEATRUM

Tammsaare — Kaasik-Aaslav
Long Steps (Pikad sammud)
melodrama

A graduation production

Directed by Katri Kaasik-Aaslav
Lighting by Ingo Raudkivi

Performed by Mart Aas, Kärt Johanson, Anne Kuusik, Thea Luik, Andri Luup, Marius Peterson, Leino Rei, Marian Rütman, Anneli Tuulik

première on May 13th and 14th, 1997, in THEATRUM

M. Betsuyaku
Väljakäik
Directed by Kaljo Kiisk
Lighting by Ingo Raudkivi

Performed by the students of EIH theatre department Elo Viiding and Hellar Bergman.

première on December 16th and 18st, 1997, in THEATRUM.

Chekhov
Little comedies (Väikesed komöödiad)
"The Bear" (Karu)
Directed by Lembit Peterson
Performed by Pirkko Vähi, Vahur Paul Põldmaa, Helvin Kaljula,

"A Tragedian Against one's Will" (Traagik vastu tahtmist)

Directed by Lembit Peterson

Performed by Leino Rei and Marius Peterson

"Difficult People" (Raskeloomulised inimesed)

Directed by Marius Peterson

Performed by Donald Tomberg, Andri Luup, Marian Rütman, Anneli Tuulik, Leino Rei and Helvin Kaljula

Designed by Margit Lillak

première on February 18rd, 1998, in the Old Town Music House of Tallinn.

Jean Anouilh

Antigone

Directed by Lembit Peterson

Designed by Lilja Blumenfeld

Lighting by Airi Eras

Sound by Marius Peterson

Performed by Maria Peterson, Aarne Üksküla, Marius Peterson, Andri Luup, Kristo Toots, Elo Viiding or Kadri Adamson, Maria Joffe or Pirkko Vähi, Eva Eensaar, Kutt Kommel, Donald Tomberg, Juhan Ulfsak and Mart Aas

première on March 4th and 5th, 1998, in THEATRUM

During the Tallinn Old Town Festival THEATRUM had two performances of *Antigone* in the ruins of the Dominican St. Catherine's Church

Jean Paul Alègre

Brief! Let's Make it Brief! (Lühidalt! Teeme lühidalt)

Directed by Igor Baturin

Designed by Reili Evert

Lighting by Maldar-Mikk Kuusk

Project manager: Mart Johanson

Sound by Igor Baturin, Raimo Pass

Performed by Anne Kuusik, Thea Luik, Aleksander Eelmaa, Raimo Pass

première on April 14th and 15th, 1998, in THEATRUM

Thomas Bernhard

The Force of Habit (Harjumuse jõud)

a joint production with the Estonian Drama Theatre

Directed by Lembit Peterson

Designed by Lilja Blumenfeld

Lighting by Airi Eras
Sound by Marius Peterson

Performed by Aarne Üksküla, Ain Lutsepp, Marius Peterson, Eva Eensaar, Leino Rei

Maurice Maeterlinck
Pelléas and Mélisande
Directed by Lembit Peterson
Designed by Lilja Blumenfeld
Lighting by Airi Eras
Sound by Marius Peterson

Performed by Anneli Tuulik, Marius Peterson, Leino Rei, Mart Aas, Lembit Peterson, Ülle Kaljuste, Andri Luup, Kadri Adamson, Eva Eensaar, Maria Joffe, Laura Peterson, Mari Juhasoo, Merle Kriis, Anne Kirikal või Maria Peterson, Thea Luik, Marian Rütman, Marion Selgall, Pirkko Vähi

première on November 19th and 21th, 1998, in THEATRUM

Willy Russell
Educating Rita (Rita koolitamine)

A graduation production

Designed by Ervin Seppel
Lighting by Airi Eras
Costume by Reet Ulfsak
Sound by Sven Grünberg

Performed by Kadri Adamson and Aarne Üksküla

première on March 31th, 1999, in THEATRUM

A. P. Chekhov
Mina. Sina. Tema. Meie. Teie. Nemas
A selection of works by Chekhov

Directed by Andri Luup
Designed by Andri Luup
Lighting by Marius Peterson and Helvin Kaljula
Sound by Marius Peterson and Eva Eensaar

Performed by Kadri Adamson, Maria Peterson, Mart Aas, Kutt Kommel, Marius Peterson, Leino Rei, Donald Tomberg, Kristo Toots

première on March 30th and 31th, 2000, in THEATRUM

Moliere
Tartuffe

A graduation production

Directed by Lembit Peterson
Designed by Dagmar Kase ja Marili Sokk
Sound by Marius Peterson

Performed by Merle Kriis, Helvin Kaljula, Maria Peterson or Maria Kasepalu-Joffe, Kristo Toots, Eva Eensaar or Mari Juhasoo, Donald Tomberg, Kutt Kommel or Kaido Rannik, Vahur-Paul Põldma, Kadri Adamson or Pirkko Vähi, Mart Aas, Leino Rei, Mari Juhasoo or Eva Eensaar

première on April 14th and 16th, 2000, in THEATRUM

A. Kitzberg
Kolm suurt soovi

Directed by Leino Rei
Designed by Andri Luup
Sound by Eva Eensaar

Performed by Thea Luik, Anneli Tuulik, Kristo Toots, Donald Tomberg, Kaido Rannik, Mart Aas, Helvin Kaljula

première on November 23th and 25th, 2000, in THEATRUM

M. Aas
Kõik on noored

Directed by Maria Peterson
Designed by Andri Luup
Sound by Maria and Marius Peterson
Consultant Lembit Peterson

Performed by Helena Lorents, Marion Selgall, Ursula Ratasepp, Mart Aas, Anne Kirikal, Laura Peterson, Thea Luik, Kristo Toots, Kristjan Jaak Tammsaar, Marius Peterson, Eva Eensaar, Andri Luup, Nero Urke, Rasmus Jurkatam, Mari-Liis Lill, Donald Tomberg

première on December 2th, 2000, in THEATRUM

Gabor Görgey
Mate, Where's the Pistol? (Vader, kus tukk on?)

Directed by Lembit Peterson
Designed by Andres Koort
Sound by Marius Peterson

Performed by Helvin Kaljula, Mart Aas, Kaido Rannik, Leino Rei, Kristo Toots

première on June 9th, 2001, in THEATRUM

F. Pessoa
Mariner (Merimees)

Directed by Lembit Peterson
Designed by Andri Luup
Light by Airi Eras

Performed by Maria Peterson, Kristi Pumbo, Anneli Tuulik

première on March 9th and 10th, 2002, in THEATRUM

D. Harms
Sonett

Directed by Donald Tomberg
Designed by Angela Komtshatnikova and Jüri Martson

Performed by Lee Kriis, Kutt Kommel, Kaido Rannik, Kristo Toots

première on March 21th and 22th, 2002, in THEATRUM

J. Viiding and Tõnis Rätsep
Beings (Olevused)

A graduation production

Directed by Lembit Peterson
Designed by Joonas Plaan
Costume by Virge Loo

Performed by Martin Mill, Aleksander Ots, Risto Kübar, Edvin Aedma, Maris Kiintok, Sandra Zaneva, Diana Treu, Anu Tromm

première on May 7th and 8th, 2002, in THEATRUM

Commedia dell'Arte
Armunud vanamehed

Directed by Patrick Pezin (France)
Designed by Leenamari Pirn
Masks by Den

Performed by Maria Peterson, Pirkko Vähi, Andri Luup, Marius Peterson, Helvin
Kaljula, Donald Tomberg, Erkki Penart, Mart Aas

première on June 19th and 20th, 2002, in Kuressaare Town Theatre

coming soon...

E. Ionesco
The Bald Soprano

Directed by Marius Peterson
Designed by Marius Peterson

Performed by Eva Eesaar, Maria Peterson, Anneli Tuulik, Andri Luup, Marius
Peterson, Kristo Toots

Written, Spoken

The birth of a miracle. How has THEATRUM become what it is today? And what is it really? A little theatre. A poor theatre. But still a real theatre. Not because of its claims or professionalism. The first are not there, yet the latter is not there, either – the actors/actresses are mainly the students and fresh graduates of the Estonian Institute of Humanities, for whom theatre was still only a part of the studies. But (no matter how heretically it may sound) – it is not important. What is important is the THEATRUM and its attitude, how the things are done. This something could be called Art, but there is no need for that. The most fascinating thing about the young actors is the awe that radiates from the stage to life, theatre, the spectator. And there is at least one more thing that distinguishes THEATRUM from other Estonian theatres: they have the courage to play tragedies.

/---/ Here they don't lure the spectator with background music, which belong to the treasured possessions of a passionate music fan, with smoke, red light or eye-catching costumes, they don't try to hide the story behind the exterior show. THEATRUM takes time and space for its productions and transmits it to the spectator.

Kadi Herkül “*The obstinate “no” of a little girl*” (Theatre.Music.Cinema no 5, 1998)

When trying to find some keywords to describe the doings of EIH Theatre Department, I would like to mention their interest in literary and theatrical heritage, attempts to build a spiritual link with other times and places, faithfulness to the author's text; but also a great emphasis on the command of voice and body, on rationalizing every moment on stage. The characteristic feature of their acting is keeping a distance (having a critical eye on everything happening on stage, inner dialogue with the audience), not an excessive stage (external) realism, forgetting oneself on stage.

Priit Rataspepp “*The rib and the trumpet*”, Kultuurimaa, May 21, 1997

Wise directing, actors - not amateurs and not professionals either, hopeful faces turned towards their theatre/future. /.../ The true-to-life acting up to the last scenes, which was especially important - these are words to describe to myself and the others a phenomenon called THEATRUM. Acting without any sign of tiredness and the consequent disappointment. Performance as an opportunity to communicate for everyone who is ready to admit that they understand and participate in “simple things”.

Ülo Tonts “*When joy of acting is not in shortage*”, Sõnumileht 16 April 1998

In the small THEATRUM they seem to move upstream. Against the dominant trends in Estonia, mainstream culture and especially, against commercialism /.../ While at cinema-theatre Kosmos the Titanic sinks, in Vene Street a white catamaran floats.

Mihkel Mutt “*The upstream spirit alive in Vene street*” Päevaleht, March 98

THEATRUM’s black stage with stone floor with only a few pieces of scenery do not demonstrate the richness of visual and sound nuances, but the exactly and ingeniously elaborated context. The close shots of actors’ faces and their actions demand a sensitive director, who loves to play with the actor’s nature as with a fragile and sensitive creative resource. But it gives plausible results only when a psychologically motivated gesture or an almost unnoticeable throb of a cheek muscle and a voice, close to a whisper, vibrating just a little, pierces the air. Everything that is as small as THEATRUM’s hall and stage where the actors are like on a palm and very-very close to the audience, needs a director who believes in working with the details, who enjoys a slow working process, who knows the nature and abilities of his “puppets” like his own five fingers, who knows how to hide their weaknesses to be able to demonstrate their mastery even more brilliantly. In short, it needs a director who has time and cares to play citadel-like theatre games in our earthly life, but who guarantees that the air breathed in this space wouldn’t turn into carbon dioxide. I didn’t smell a stuffy room, the co-operation between the actors and the director becomes a process that results in a fresh flow of oxygen.

J. Anouilh
ANTIGONE

Antigone is a programmatic piece of this theatre. Both as to acting and the theme...

Kristiina Garancis *Antigone and the Gorgons* Sirp, 13 March 1998

The work done in THEATRUM melted from beneath snow at the beginning of March to take the form of a beautiful result. The production of *Antigone* is a clear sign that this is not an underground work or work done only for one’s own benefit, as it has been suspected sometimes. /.../ No doubt that a theatre-lover who happens to miss the production has missed a lot.

Tõnu Seero *Not compromising Antigone in THEATRUM* Õhtuleht 17 March 1998

The last *premiere* in THEATRUM, *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh, in one act lasted about two hours. These hours almost flew by. /---/ The production is discreet, drawn with a clear, clean line, almost minimalistically. The most simple and universal truth(s) have been kept in mind, such as that after every silent beginning a forte becomes especially significant, that force can be recognised by the force that is used to hold it back, that actors have to know what they are playing, etc. The result is fascinating.

Mihkel Mutt “*The upstream spirit is alive in Vene street*” Päevaleht, March 98

I consider Lembit Peterson’s production a remarkable success. /---/ The whole production was carried out in a pleasant piano-like style; the cothurni were not

necessary even in the most tragic episodes./---/ even with slender means it is possible to produce true art. It sounds like a cliché, but it's true.

Enn Vetemaa "*A classical tragedy in THEATRUM*" Sõnumileht 8 March 98

What has worked in Lembit Peterson's productions before, worked here as well: when somebody repeats in a straightforward and persistent manner that beauty is beauty and love is love, it finally destroys the Creon-type "common sense" and the barriers of Realpolitik. And suddenly it becomes clear what catharsis could mean in the cradle of European culture.

Kaia Sisask *A girl and fate* Kultuurimaa 18 March 98

Maeterlinck

PELLEAS AND MÉLISANDE

Pelleas and Mélisande in THEATRUM gives the spectator some respite from the average theatre in Estonia and a realization that it is really time to do something in a different way.

And here I don't mean to make use of the media or the internet. But to explore the sources of the old, the noble and the antique in a way that they seem to be absolutely novel, because they introduce a new point of view, a new definition of beauty, a new conception of an actor. Even if the performance reminded me of a school theatre at some point. But the fact that I came to think of a school theatre means that there is real enthusiasm, still fresh, with the charm of the first time. We have experienced this repeatedly within the walls THEATRUM with its very special atmosphere.

This production reexamines the positions of our traditional psychological theatre. Maeterlinck's idea of diminishing the role of an actor in the poetic theatre to the level of a marionette has found its own interpretation in the original creativity of Lembit Peterson's production. It is impossible to describe how human desires have been turned to poetry. What was surprising was an almost imperceptible humorous undertone, that here and there accompanies the tragic premonitions. So an assuring atmosphere is achieved, it is easy to be there and it is easy to breathe.

/-/ Debussy has written: "I think of a new dramatic form - music exists for the inexpressible. I would like it to come out from the dark and at times go back into it." It becomes evident, that this inexpressible can also be expressed through theatre, through words, only if the inner, the unreal level of the play can be made visible...

Lilian Vellerand The Mystery of Love and Death. Päevaleht, 24. November 1998

Thomas Bernhard

THE FORCE OF HABIT

As bad theatre has always been a sign of the decline in society, so has good theatre accompanied the growth and the flourishing as in ancient Greece as in Elizabethan

England. In case the rule is still valid (and why it shouldn't), *The Force of Habit* announces a new era.

A new rise necessitates a new way of saying things. Our Estonian language is poor in some ways. It lacks the elevated language, the language of different social groups is more or less the same, the language of a simple man is not simple enough to make a clear difference. But after *The Force of Habit* there are more ways of saying things, more things to say.

The brilliant translation of the play by Jaan Undusk, so full of nuances and so subtle, plus the role interpretations by Marius Peterson, Arne Üksküla and Ain Lutsepp build together what could be called a reform in speech. It is not an invented language, it is the coinage of words, but the creation of speech and the determination of the social hierarchy of the words./-/

Lembit Peterson's productions here and now is prophetic. I believe that in about ten years' time our first entrepreneurs will complain about lack of concentration and want to see a therapist; in twenty-two years, passing huge office blocks, we can hear rehearsals of the Trout Quintet from hundreds of office windows. Even if I do not survive until then, I have seen it already. I have seen the future. Thank you.

Kaur Kender The time of prophets has come. *Estonian Express. Areen.* 16. October 1998

Lembit Peterson's production *The Force of Habit* in the small hall of the Estonian Drama Theatre inspires hope. It is an intensive play from the beginning to the end with good acting and a set design and lighting that make an enjoyable whole. We can have a part in a fascinating polyphony where the voices of Bernhard, Undusk, Peterson, Blumenfeld, Eras, and - last but not least - the actors, merge into a theatrical event, rather complex, yet perceptible with all the senses.

All the roles in the quintet (performed by the Drama Theatre top actors Üksküla and Lutsepp and the young Theatrum actors Eensaar, Peterson and Rei) are in some ways caricatured, using the devices of different kinds of theatre./-/ It is a pleasure to see Üksküla act - his ability to hold tension without doing nothing, to emphasise even the smallest detail, to vary endlessly one and the same motive, to fade from a loud-voiced torrent of words into silence, to change the acting style in an instant. It is a role that casts light to Üksküla's artistic career; it forms meaningful associations.

In addition to the actors' vocal part, each movement, pose, expression, even sitting on the stage has meaning in Peterson's production. It was extremely refreshing to see Lutsepp playing the role of an animal tamer. The Theatrum actors fit into the quintet with a pleasant self-confidence and dignity.

Watching *The Force of Habit* could become a pleasant, but strenuous spring-autumn-winter habit, recurring from year to year.

Priit Rataspepp Theatre.Circus.Art. Sirp, 9.October 1998

Pushkin

LITTLE TRAGEDIES

Love at first sight – this is what happened, if it is appropriate to talk about such a thing between the theatre and the audience. This happened last November in Tartu with the performance of *Little tragedies*.

Ülo Tonts “When joy of acting joy is not in shortage”, *Sõnumileht*, 16 april 1998

After having seen the graduation production of the EIH theatre department, Pushkin's *Little Tragedies*, I could ask what kind of new acting is this?... The action on stage is mostly subdued, restrained and modest, only occasionally one can sense the force that is needed to hold back force.

... was cognitively exciting to see theatre that carries a different philosophy of acting compared to what is prevailing on our stages, and which is up to the mark. Actors of Peterson's school have obviously had a different spiritual preparation and have acquired a unique attitude towards art. /---/

Side by side with the big theatres there have always been studios from where those have come who change things.

Mihkel Mutt “Pushkin is languidly sublime”, SIRP 18 April 1997

... The exactness in movement, gesture and word plus the inner chargedness of the actors form the poetical style of the performance, in which extremely disciplined acting is supported and accented by a skimpy, but an obtrusive musical frame. The verse sounds surprisingly simple, there is no trace of declamation. The ensemble forms a whole, *mise en scène* elegant, each detail significant. /---/. It is an interesting way of following one's own way and showing one's own school, striking nor for its playfulness or the brilliance and maturity of a particular actor's work but for its ensemble work, for its ethical attitude and spiritual atmosphere.

Lilian Tamm “Little Tragedies”, Kultuurimaa, 14 May 1997

What will become of THEATRUM? This is probably the most interesting question that the *Little Tragedies* raised. The present time in Estonian theatre is not the best to search for new forms – and then again it is quite good when one considers the general mediocrity mixed with obscenity that we are shown most often. Beside commercialism and quick success there must be artists, who are interested in art itself, without the accompanying flowers and applause. At the same time is important that this theatre wouldn't be amateurish, that the form wouldn't pose problems for the actor and that all the attention be directed to finding new means of expression. How this realises in THEATRUM, time will show.

Kalle Käsper “*Four refined sketches*” *Päevaleht*, 19 Oct 97