

TRANSGRESSIVE COLLABORATIONS: THE CASE OF VON KRAHL THEATRE

Established in 1992, Von Krahl Theatre is the first permanently operating private theatre in re-independent Estonia. In the 1990s it acted as an open platform for diverse experimental theatre projects. At the turn of the century, Von Krahl theatre hired a small permanent troupe and intensely developed international collaboration. The paper takes look at two collaborative productions that premiered in 2001. *Connecting People*, directed by Finnish guest director Erik Söderblom from Q-Teatteri, was the world premiere of Jouko Turkka's controversial play *Osta pientä ihmistä*. Production was received as a social critical performance, missing in Estonian theatre of the time, and it generated debates revolving around ethical and political issues. *Pirates*, the collaboration of Von Krahl Theatre and Showcase Beat le Mot from Hamburg, was one of the first examples of performance-theatre in Estonia. In criticism, it was called "an *underground* outbreak teasing official theatre culture and acts like a vagabond invading a nunnery".

In the social and theatrical context of post-Soviet Estonia, these collaborations questioned established norms and values. Very likely the social and aesthetic impulses, at least in part, came from the theatrical cultures with which Von Krahl collaborated, and where social and artistic boundaries may have been drawn differently. This raises the question of whether or in what respect transgressions were perceived as a kind of imported phenomenon. The paper discusses the reception of the above-mentioned productions in Estonia, and more generally, the interplay of different contexts and its effect on the perception of transgressivity.

Biography

Luule Epner, PhD, is an Estonian theatre and literary researcher. She is Associate Professor at the School of Humanities of Tallinn University. Her main research fields are Estonian theatre history, theory and practices of postdramatic theatre, and drama theory. She has published widely in different journals. She is the author of *Draamateooria probleeme I-II (Problems of Drama Theory, 1992, 1994)*, and the co-author of *Eesti kirjanduslugu (Estonian Literary*

History, 2001) and *Eesti sõnateater 1965–1985 (Estonian Dramatic Theatre 1965–1985*, 2015). Her most recent book, *Mängitud maailmad (Worlds in Play)*, was published in 2018.