

## **OPERA FILM “BANUTA” - EXAMPLE OF TRANSGRESSION AND PERFORMATIVITY**

The paper aims to tackle the project that was initially planned as interactive music theatre production that turned into opera-film due to Covid-19 circumstances and restrictions. Anyway, in case of “Baņuta” we deal with officially 1st Latvian original opera deconstructed and transformed into a new movie-opera form in the 21st century, proving that such transformation does not necessarily mean the mocking of national romanticism or culture values. German director Franziska Kronfoth has found a key that surprisingly resonates with social contexts of 21st century and in particular in 2022. The recontextualized story finds new audiences and new perception contexts without violating the original idea, although it is undoubtedly innovative and transgressive, bringing in such issues women’s experience at war and questioning of traditions both in terms of contents and form.

A hundred years after the premiere of Alfrēds Kalniņš’ “Baņuta” in 1920, comes the opera film – an international project that melts opera, musical performance, the conditionality of the performing arts and contemporary performativity. Director Franziska Kronfoth and dramaturg Evarts Melnalksnis bring together Latvian artists and the German musical theatre collective “Hauen und Stechen” to interpret the dramatic message, which they do without sentimentality, playing with time and shattering space into pieces. The trauma and violence of war and personal relationships is an important leitmotif – Baņuta takes part in partisan battles, bringing with her the collective experience of the women who have suffered through the wars in 20th century Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, mixing the boundaries between genres, a paradoxical sense of humor seeps into the tragedy, while characters stuck deep in the centuries strive to break the fourth wall. This example brings the theory of performativity into practice and challenging the museum value of the piece opens new horizons and contexts for the subject treated within.

### **Biography**

Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča holds a PhD degree in Arts by the University of Latvia (2018), she is a researcher of Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music (since 2020), music and theatre critic. Head of Latvian National Section of International Theatre Critics' Association AICT/IACT and coordinator of international relations in Latvian Theatre Labour Association, editor of the musicology magazine "Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti" and co-editor of Latvian theatre website *Krodērs.lv*. As a freelancer she has worked for "Neatkarīga Rita avīze", the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest daily newspaper of Latvia, covering themes related to classical music, opera and theatre since 2004 to 2020. Regularly publishes articles in national magazines of music and theatre. In 2022 works in the jury of the Great Music Award of Latvia and as an expert invited by radio "Latvian Radio 3 Klasika".