

**KUŠNÍROVÁ, Eva (2017): *The Theatre of Particular Features. Theatre Ensemble Hviezdoslav Spišská Nová Ves*. Prešov: Faculty of Arts, Prešov university of Prešov in Prešov. ISBN 978-80-555-1818-3. 305 p.**

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Even in the period that is particularly characterised by consumerism and unstable culture, it is an indisputable fact that the Art of Thalia remains its integral part, despite very unfavourable circumstances arising from the often dishonoured claim of lack of funds. It is similar to recent times, it is also today true that even in the life of contemporary society the theatrical art remains the subject of interest to a minority of its potential recipients, if we do not take into account the narrative projects of commercial focus in the spirit of non-national provenience and different cultural traditions.

In 2018, we recall the origin of the first Czechoslovak Republic, which, besides the fact that it has established itself in the international context as a fully-fledged governmental unit, also brings significant changes in the field of cultural development in the territory of Slovakia as well as its integral component, while these

changes concern also theatrical creation. However, it is a great pity that, in such intentions, the interest of both the professional and the laic public focuses primarily on professional dramatics, which is primarily represented by the Slovak National Theatre and the gradually establishing network of regional professional theatres. In the shade of this interest, however, there is an amateur theatre in different regions of Slovakia, even though it is in that context irreplaceable and unforgettable theatre. At this point, however, the individual character of the Spiš region has to be reminded from the aspect of its varied national composition, the cause of which was its stormy history, especially in the context of Tatar invasions and the subsequent settlement of this region by the population of German origin, which ultimately demonstrated itself in the area of urban law, business, language, but not least in the field of culture, an integral part of which was also a relatively frequent activity in the field of theatrical life. The authoress of the monograph is very well aware of the context which is the part of her long-term professional interest, as the reflexion of multicultural character of the life of society of this seemingly peripheral region in the time when the concept defined this way was completely unknown, but nevertheless it was practiced in the community of region daily. In this context, the authoress of the monograph explicitly points out to the significant impact on the cultural uplift of Slovakia in the post-revolutionary period from the side of

Czech intelligentsia, which was also reflected in the region of Spiš. The benefit of the representatives of the communities of other nations into the culture of the Slovak majority is currently unfortunately often marginalised. At the same time pointing to these facts is more necessary now, because in this field, we are today witnessing pseudo-patriotism and even national elitism.

That is why it is also important to welcome also creative works that perceive the activity of theatrical amateur ensembles in the territory of today's Slovak Republic in terms of various contexts, underlining that their activity not only in the centre of social events but also in the provinces, such as the Spiš region, undeniably contributed to the now widely recognised high standard of Slovak theatre and in international criterion, especially if we realise that many personalities who have contributed to this fact, to a significant extent come from the amateur environment. It is quite clear to note in this regard that also the monograph of Eva Kušnírová entitled *The theatre of particular features. Theatre ensemble Hviezdoslav Spišská Nová Ves* which was published in 2017, is precisely such act, even though the authoress herself also notes the “absence” of an integral monograph about theatrical life in Spiš, which undoubtedly represents a challenge to continue in similar activities in the near future.

From the methodological point of view the loyalty is evident there in the evaluated monograph to the mapping of the amateur theatre in the spirit of the research activities of the following personalities from the field of teatrology: Anton Kret, Oleg Dlouhý, Ladislav Čavojský, Vladimír Štefko, Ján Jaborník or Ján Sládeček, while the authoress emphasises the principle of chronological expansiveness, but it is also necessary to evaluate that at the conclusion of the individual chapters she brings reflections, which she depicts as balance or digression, by which she refills resp. “finalises” some facts, while she uses abundantly valuable material which she has acquired not only based on her study of literature, resp. little known archival materials or regional print, but also memories of the memorial and living legend of the ensemble Hviezdoslav, Mr. Ing. Peter König.

All the aforementioned contribute to the rather concise and compact view of the activities of the theatre ensemble Hviezdoslav (1932 – 2012) and its mission in the field of amateur theatre not only in the context of Spiš region but also in terms of the formation of Slovak dramatics at all. At the same time it is needed to evaluate the efforts of the authoress in the field of factography the ensemble as well as the profiles of significant personalities. Since the theatre has set the mirror of the development of the society in the background of its historical peripeteias, it would be possible to object to the places and the tendency to simplified approach in the context of postulated reflection, but nevertheless it can be clearly stated that the monograph of Eva Kušnírová – in the given context of the subject of her professional interest – is a relevant contribution, which has the undeniable potential to become an inspiring source of information for all the interested parties about the development of dramatics in Slovakia.

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