



My Granddad was digging. My Dad was digging. And I will not dig.

PRESS CUTS

FORMAL APPROACH / FANATIC PROTESTANTISM

The show resembles the carnival-like anti-world, where the following things are all together ridiculed (read – questioned): everything that is visible and invisible, holy and sinful, the fundamentals of "the temple" of traditional Ukrainian and foreign theater - with its affection for psychological, pretending, acting, with its "sacred" knowledge about human being, its stiff metaphors and civil pathos. In the show they dare to criticize even untouchable of the national faith, that have been – due to the efforts of particularly obstinate patriots – turned into the real fetishes. [...]

One of the important paradoxes of “My Granddad was digging...” (...) – here, behind all this real or pretended brewery one can feel their overwhelming longing for a new (theater) faith. Mourning on the fact that after post-modernistic tornado, false and real have been mixed and turned into the specific cultural “surzhyk”. And now, in order to not get cheated, one needs to be critical, so: one needs to be alert and armed, prepared for the sacred war with simulacrum, that is with replicated copies which in fact don’t have any basis in the original.

Iryna Chuzhinova “Formal approach (chapter: Fanatic protestantism)”

Ukrainian Theatre No 4, 2016, Kyiv

<http://cultua.media/formalnij-pdhd>

“MY GRANDDAD WAS DIGGING...”: CHAOS OF MEMORIES

At the beginning, the show „My Granddad was digging...” is deconstructing mental clichés, in which the last generations of Ukrainians were raised up, and which still, in even more horrendous form, are shaping our information space. The concept of traumatic past itself loses its power and turns into the number of causalities and prejudices that form our daily way of thinking.

“My mum used to teach me to wee quietly” – tells one of the actresses, and then she sits on the toilet and pisses loudly. Reaching the level of absurd in some scenes, the actors only show us, how far our inherited shame and guilt became inevitable part of our (and their own) life.

At the same time, the performance doesn’t make the attempts to put the reality in order, or to criticize it. It rather demonstrates, what kind of chaos of ideologies, that have been mixed long before the time of getting the independence, we have to face. Like in the scene, when soviet patriotic song turns into German one, then into Polish one, and then – into Ukrainian one to reach the point of cacophony at the end.

It seems, that the value of “My Granddad was digging...” lies in the ability of recognizing the chaos that is created on stage, since this is the same chaos that lots of us carry in ourselves. And even if the understanding of the context may be different for different audiences (...), still – this feeling of disorientation is, I believe, very close to many of us. In the world, where every other second the heroes are being changed, and the new values are being introduced, and while these changes are based on very suspicious intentions, we constantly are longing for the feeling of safety. And the old traumas, that we haven’t managed to work out yet, are being multiplied and overlaid by the entirely fresh ones. To admit this is the opportunity to get aware of this chaos, and to live through present time.

The show “My Granddad was digging...” will not give the joy to the oversensitive spectator, indeed it does not have to. But it may help some of us to feel less lonely. The rest is less relevant.

**Jevgenja Olijnik, >>“My Granddad was digging...”: the chaos of memories<<
cultural magazine Korydor, March 29, 2017, Kyiv**

<http://www.korydor.in.ua/ua/opinions/mij-did-kopav-haos-pamjati.html>

ENRAGED AND HONEST

And yet, they will also try to cry and self-pity, but this will be one more stylistic trick: the tears are not real, my pain is bigger than the pain of the others. Pop-music that everybody can recognize; pop-symbols, that everybody can read, the true, that everybody knows, but nobody speaks loudly.

Because we cannot lose hope, cause we have difficult situation in the country, *we cannot speak about it, Lukas*. This is not even about the fear of war – let’s be honest: in the course of two years it stopped being so terrifying any more. The authors of “My Granddad was digging...” are speaking not so much about this, as about something else: something kind of tiny, to find its way to the field of attention right now (*There’s a war in the country, and they...*): about the fear of our (Ukrainian) medical system, about brother who was drug addict, and who “didn’t die in this war”; about horrible patriarchal traditions still present in XXI century, when the men has to, and the woman should; about public theatre and hypocrisy; about kitsch, about fashionable training suits, and about how sick we are of all this.

Enraged and honest, on stage they speak and do on stage all this, what in our society is labeled as “to awkward and uncomfortable to be done”.

Yevgenia Nesterovych, “Enraged and honest”,

Zbruch, October 10, 2016, Lviv

<https://zbruc.eu/node/57130>

“MY GRANDDAD WAS DIGGING...”: VERBALIZATION OF SUBTEXTS

In this show verbatim and shock, theatrical display and theatrical, so to say, “anti-play” are combined in the best possible way. Confessions of four Ukrainian and one Pole become a manifesto of anti-theater, open its structure and work against it. Dynamics, grotesque, and tragi-comic quality presented against the background of the black soil scattered on the stage, shovels, military helmets, monument of Lenin, and God knows what else – all of these, mingled together, creates a picture of the absurdity of today’s life.

The performance-challenge is gaining momentum, and getting closer to an end in the series of verbatim-monologues of the actors. In the finale scenes it reaches level of the pure outrageous excitement: penetrating yell addressed to the world around – it’s enough, you are a crap.

Anastasia Golovnenko, >>GoGolFest 2016 / “My Granddad was digging...”<<: verbalization of subtexts<<

Theatre.ua, September 2016, Kyiv

<http://teatre.com.ua/review/ogolfest16-yskusstvo-dlja-lenyvyyx/>