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Last Rehearsal for The Generation

Via Negativa and SNT Drama Ljubljana

The key, indeed central, dimension of the project Generation's Last Rehearsal lies in its location, or so it seems. "The joint cultural revolt" of the main national theatre (SNG Drama Ljubljana) and "alternative" theatre (Via Negativa) takes place in Mala drama, a space normally not associated with such "transgressive" acts. Still, the gesture is not all that radical really; after all, the project is not included as part of any given annual repertoire; no one will be obliged to see it and neither will it be "foisted" upon those who should indeed see it.

By the same token, the coming together of three members of the Drama ensemble (Matija (Rozman, Veronika Drolc and Boris Mihalj) with three permanent members of Via Negativa (Grega Zorc, Marko Mandić and Katarina Stegnar) is not as subversive as some loyal supporters of Via Negativa or Drama, or even both, might imagine or even wish for. It all remains confined to the level of declaration, which is not necessarily bad, especially if the performing collective are aware of this fact. ("Let's establish first what you are in fact watching? Another fucking cultural event, hardly earth-shattering.") The content is risky, but not dangerous; somehow benign, it precisely matched the current atmosphere of the Slovene theatrical scene.

While the "alternative crowd" in the manner of terrorists occupies the venue, crude complaints are charged like bullets at the current Slovene cultural situation, their leading actors and their empty formal blabbering. The anger mounting in "independent" institutions and self-employed actors is palpably ready to explode; but it is more than clear that it is the "victims" on the stage who are venting these dissatisfactions, while the safely employed are only "witnessing" the tirade. It seems as though both camps of performers occupy separate sides of the professional or creative problem; the first would, but cannot, while the second might, but are not allowed to.

Grega Zorc, Marko Mandić and Katarina Stegnar stand before us fully equipped, giving us biographical "treats" (beside the chocolate cake), at times subversive and wanton, then simply humorous; they dig at each other here and there, gently prodding the audience, all in all delivering just the right measure of suspense. Their three more or less statically seated and sour-faced replicas of the future (Matija Rozman, Veronika Drolc and Boris Mihalj) act as contextual support, offering insight into what awaits them in old age when all that is left of the body is an apparition and anxiety of a blundered career.

The replica trio also establishes the real but unspoken status relationship, which towards the end, when the positions change, turns into its opposite. The passing on of "tied hands" and the inability to actually rebel gets transposed, though, on the level of semiotics, the subject remains the same throughout, even if in the form of two separate temporal frameworks. In the first instance, "tied hands" represent finances, while in the second institutional ideology. Is the solution for a better-quality culture (in this case completely verbally abused) hidden in the wallet or in people's heads? Or simply in the fact that one person invests the material and the other their daring? Generation's Last Rehearsal timely and cleverly suggests this, now it will only have to break through the "repertoire" barrier and the rehearsal will no longer have to be merely a rehearsal.