

Editors' Preface

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Music has been an integral part of theatre for centuries, or even millennia if we consider ancient Greek theatre or the widespread belief that theatre originated from ritual, with which music is inextricably linked. Depending on the theatre's function, artistic goals and practical possibilities, music has been a more or less important component of performances. Of the sixteen issues of *Res Musica* published to date, one—the fifth volume, published in 2013—dealt exclusively with music theatre. Edited by Kristel Pappel, it was the first collection of academic articles on music theatre published in Estonian. The sections were entitled 'History', 'Stage Interpretations' and 'Audience', and the articles were framed by the thoughts of theatre theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte and opera researcher Clemens Risi on the research perspectives of music theatre.

While these observations remain valid, much has changed in the practice and study of music theatre, particularly with regard to the relationship between music and theatre. The number of hybrid theatre forms is constantly growing, and the relationship between music and other theatrical elements is often unclear and can vary significantly within a single production or performance. As a form that combines different art forms, theatre development is also influenced by the laws governing the development of those art forms. However, as different art forms often develop in opposite directions, theatre becomes a unique space where the seemingly impossible becomes possible. Music plays an important role in mitigating, amplifying or creating such conflicts.

The annual conference of the Estonian Theatre Researchers and Critics Association (Eesti Teatriuurijate ja -kriitikute Ühendus, ETUKÜ), held at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (EAMT) in November 2023, focused on mapping changes and analysing current trends.¹ Some of the articles in *Res Musica* 17 further explore

themes that emerged during the conference. Both the conference and the current selection of articles reveal significant paradigm shifts in theatre and music studies. Theatre scholars are increasingly engaging with musical concepts, while music scholars are adopting tools from theatre studies. New central concepts include musicality, soundscapes, and musicalisation.

According to music theatre researcher David Roesner, German theatre took a musical turn in the early 1990s. This was evident in the increased importance of music and sound, as well as in the implementation of collaborative methods in rehearsals and aesthetic exploration. In Estonia, Peeter Jalakas, founder and director of the Von Krahli Theatre, has been combining musical and theatrical elements in his productions since the mid-1990s, reflecting the process of becoming musical that is characteristic of post-dramatic theatre.

About ten to fifteen years ago, theatre studies took a musical turn in connection with the increasing hybridisation of theatre arts, i.e. the intertwining and merging of artistic means of expression. This process has created new opportunities for musicologists and theatre scholars to find common ground, review methodology and harmonise concepts, even when dealing with different materials, approaches and objectives. This journey will certainly continue, and hopefully this issue of *Res Musica* will encourage us to remain on this path.

In the opening article, Aurora Ruus discusses the aesthetics of autonomy from a philosophical perspective. As the author notes, 'Music, and even more so the understanding of a musical work, finds its unique expression in autonomy aesthetics and the idea of the autonomy of a musical work. This work structures time, yet simultaneously exists independently and permanently in time and history as an art form [---]' (p. 19). Ruus examines the historical

¹ The conference, organised by ETUKÜ and EAMT, took place within the framework of the Estonian Doctoral School on 10 and 11 November 2023, with the support of the Dramatic Art Endowment of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia. Kristel Pappel, Madli Pesti and Kerri Kotta put together the programme. See Maria Mölder 2023. Where is the boundary between music and spoken theatre? – *Sirp*, 17.11.

development of the concept of an autonomous musical work using a genealogical approach. She also observes that Estonian musical culture has begun to pay increasing attention to the autonomy of specific musical works, as well as to other musical texts and forms of musical expression (p. 32).

Liis Kibuspuu analyses the role of music in performance art from the 1980s until Estonia regained its independence. She raises the question of whether performance art, which combines different art forms, can also be viewed in the context of experimental music theatre. Her primary material is taken from the work of Leonhard Lapin and Sven Grünberg, with a particular focus on the collaboration between Siim-Tanel Annus and Ariel Lagle. In collaboration with Annus, Lagle created the music for the performances of *Läbimised (The Transitions)*, 1987) and *Kullavalamine (The Casting of Gold)*, 1988), which are considered to be some of the first original sound designs in Estonia, created specifically for performance art. Kibuspuu concludes that the collaboration between Annus and Lagle was successful because the artist and composer worked independently, allowing the music and visuals to exist side by side and complement each other rather than imitate one another.

Hedi-Liis Toome takes a closer look at the concept of musicality based on one production by the Ugala Theatre and two by the Tartu New Theatre, namely *Kolm ahvi (Three Monkeys)*, *Stereo* and *Mis saab siis, kui meid enam ei ole? (What Happens When We Are No Longer Here?)*, which were performed in 2022 and 2023. In doing so, she builds upon the research of Roesner mentioned above. Toome explores how to analyse productions that make extensive use of musical design but minimal use of words, and emphasises the strategic function and aesthetic-artistic goals of musical design. She also acknowledges that musicality manifests differently in various productions, necessitating distinct approaches from researchers.

Luule Epner states that 'the functioning of sounds and music in spoken theatre has only recently begun to be studied in depth' (p. 69), providing a brief overview of the current state of research and its future directions. In her article, she primarily focuses on the soundscapes in Lauri

Lagle's productions, examining what they consist of, how they are created, and their function in the overall production. Epner defines a soundscape as a consciously created combination of sounds in a production. This concept encompasses all audible elements, including musical and non-musical sounds, human voices and noises, as well as silence, which is defined as the absence of sound (p. 71).

Anneli Saro understands musicality as an open concept, within which the following distinctions can be made: musicality as a mood; perceiving phenomena as if they were music; and the conscious attempt to treat certain materials, such as sound, as music (p. 86). In theatre, musicality can be treated as a creative method, as an aesthetic model or poetics, and as a metaphor expressed in an idea or material. In her article, Saro uses musical terms such as 'opera', 'ensemble', 'numerical structure' and 'operatic emotion'. Her observations are based on three productions by Lauri Lagle.

Amidst these theoretical discussions, this issue also features an interview with two Estonian composers. Their music theatre works, which are very different from each other, were performed in 2022. That year saw the first performances of two stage works by Helena Tulve—the documentary nature opera *Wölfe (Wolves)* and the mystery play *Visiones (Visions)*—and the premiere of Tatjana Kozlova-Johannes's sound theatre work *söövitab. tuhk (etching.ash)*. The composers discuss how to secure an opera commission, their experiences of collaborating with librettists and directors, and their ideas for the future of music theatre. They also talk about how this genre could be fostered in Estonia.

In 2023, a new relationship between music and theatre was established with the premiere of Semper-Ojasoo-Elts's *Macbeth*, a collaboration between the Estonian Drama Theatre, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra and the State Concert Institute Eesti Kontsert. The musical material for the production was primarily sourced from Lepo Sumera's six symphonies. In his article, Kerri Kotta analyses the role of music in the production, drawing on two archetypal narrative forms: tragedy and the sonata cycle. This approach is unprecedented in music theatre studies. By the narrative form of tragedy, Kotta primarily means the plot or sequence of events in

temporal and causal order. Drawing on the work of music theorist Mark Aranovsky (Aranovski), Kotta treats the sonata cycle as an archetypal narrative, describing its formal and semantic journey. According to Aranovsky, the four-part sonata cycle represents the individual—the active, thinking, playing, and socially functioning human being (i.e. *homo agens*, *homo sapiens*, *homo ludens*, and *homo communis*).

In their joint article, Madli Pesti and Kristel Pappel also examine the various roles of music in a production, analysing Tiit Ojasoo's 2023 interpretation of Mati Unt's play *Vend Antigone, ema Oidipus* (*Brother Antigone, Mother Oedipus*). The authors analyse the elements that contribute to the production's overall musicality and describe its phenomenological and performative impact. They found that Bert O. States' idea of binocular vision, which combines phenomenological and semiotic perspectives, was suitable for analysing the production. The authors conclude that this production can be considered a musical composition, setting it apart as exceptional in the Estonian theatre scene.

The focus of Piret Kruuspere's article is on the use of sound, music and design in Estonian spoken theatre, with a particular emphasis on Estonian memory theatre. As theatre scholar Jeanette R. Malkin defines it, memory theatre imitates, depicts or triggers the process of remembering shared, often contradictory, and sometimes suppressed or repressed memories of the past. Kruuspere focuses on the work of the playwrights Rein Saluri and Madis Kõiv, and the director Merle Karusoo, all of whom have addressed the theme of memory.

In their article on singers' textual clarity, Veeda Kala and Marju Raju address a practical yet highly important and topical issue in music theatre. It highlights 'those aspects of singers' experience that concern the contribution of key figures in opera staging to improving textual clarity in opera theatre' (p. 167). To reach their conclusions, the authors conducted interviews with 30 opera singers from Europe and North America, 11 of whom were Estonian-speaking.

This issue of *Res Musica* concludes with an article on music history by Aleksandra Dolgopolova, written as part of the creative research project 'Revival of the *Cembal d'amour*' at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. The article focuses on David Kellner's collection *XVI. Auserlesene Lauten-Stücke* (1747) for *cembal d'amour* and basso continuo, which is based on Kellner's work *Treulicher Unterricht im General-Bass* (1732). The article provides an overview of the life of the 18th-century composer, organist, poet, music theorist and officer, David Kellner (1670–1748). He studied at the University of Tartu (Dorpat), lived in Tartu for several years and worked briefly as an organist in Tallinn (Reval). The second subject of the article is Kellner's foster daughter, Regina Gertrud Schwartz, who was not only the first poetess of Livonia, but also probably the first female composer in Estonia. Dolgopolova provides an overview of Schwarz's activities and discusses her involvement in creating a unique instrument: the *cembal d'amour*.

As is now customary, the final part of *Res Musica* features a section including book reviews and a chronicle.