

Risto Stefanovski. Театарот во Македонија. Современи тенденции. (The Theater in Macedonia: Contemporary Tendencies). Skopje: Makedonski Narodni Teatar, 2002, 591 pp.

Risto Stefanovski is the premier historian of theater in Macedonia, and this is his third volume of a monumental project to archive the history of theater in Macedonia from antiquity to the present. This volume covers the period from 1958 to 1962. Stefanovski is practically an institution in Macedonian theater scholarship. The period of theater history covered in this volume is groundbreaking in the history of Macedonian theater because it is during this period that questions arise regarding theater public, theater taste in relation to what theaters offer, the politics of picking repertory (which plays should be staged), the education of actors and other theater professionals. This period is also the breaking point between the socialist realist tradition and modernism. This volume represents a complete picture of theater life on a collective and individual level.

Following a methodology established in his earlier volumes, Stefanovski's archiving of Macedonian theater life is systematic, complete and verifiable. The volume is an archived history of Macedonian theater in the period 1958-1962. It is an accumulation of facts and documents covering every aspect of theater life. This period is the basis for the building of the Macedonian theater public. Writers who were educated abroad, for the first time are writing in Macedonian. Education of actors and theater professionals. The Macedonian literary language was codified only a decade earlier. The theater was one means by which the literary language was helped to solidify. Conflict between theater in Skopje and provincial theaters, low quality, little financing.

Macedonian theater in the years following immediately after World War II is tied closely to Yugoslav theater. In fact, the first generation of Macedonian theater professionals were educated almost exclusively abroad, in Belgrade, Zagreb and at other theater centers in the Balkans. Similarly, the Macedonian theater public shared its tastes with that of its neighbors. Therefore, it is difficult to speak of specifically Macedonian tendencies in the theater during the first decade after the war. The theater repertory during this period consisted almost exclusively of classical, European and Yugoslav plays, and now Russian plays as well.

The period in Macedonian theater history covered in this book represents the affirmation of Macedonian theater. It is the beginning of theater history that is represented by theater professionals educated in Macedonia. The issues raised by theater professionals at this time is the subject of the first chapter in Stefanovski's book. Toward the end of 1956 the Republic's Council for education and culture formed a commission on theater to develop a policy on theater, its job was to analyze the conditions of theaters in Macedonia.