

The Tragedy of Lucifer

Summary

DLA Thesis of Sandor Csikos

The subject of the thesis: The history of Lucifer's role in the National Theatre between 1883-1994.

The purpose of the thesis is to follow and analyse of the interpretation of the role through its first performances.

I tried to find answers as to how Lucifer's stage appearances have changed and what kind of costumes and masks he wore in different performances. It was very exciting to see how different stage directors and actors interpreted Lucifer's role. I analysed each new production according to the dates throughout the stage history of play.

I put the role's history in a separate chapter

Following the stage history of the *Tragedy of Man* you can draw a clear portrait of the social, cultural and ideological background of the societies in which the play was put on stage.

When the play and the performance stood at the centre of ideological fights and discussions, the play's poetic and artistic values could not be appreciated. Those reviews which were led by political views could not give a correct idea of the play and the performances.

My approach: I had the opportunity to study the intentions of each director of the play, as well as reading the reviews, stage designs, memoirs and photos of the productions.

Ede Paulay's first essay on his interpretation before its first night became a model and established a tradition later for mostly all directors of the play to compose their ideas of their own interpretation. I could find these essays in different monthlies, newspapers or programme books of the theatres.

You could follow the realisation of their intentions from the reviews.

As I am an actor, it was very important to me what kind of set design the performance had, what kind of costume Lucifer wore.

The Tragedy of Lucifer title of my thesis has a double meaning.

First: analysing the character of Lucifer's character in the literary masterpiece we can emphasize its tragic side. But it is not the purpose of the thesis to write about all these features, we can name only a few of the most characteristic tragic features. He is the spirit, the intellectuality, the representation of ratio, he is not able to feel, and he has no affinity for sentiments at all. He is not able to create, only to criticise.

The poetic drama in the theatre became the theatre script. The written word gets a new dimension: you can hear and see it.

If we follow and analyse the stage appearances of Lucifer, we can see that the interpretation of Paulay's first production

defined and was an inspiration to the interpretation of the following decades.

The strangely shaped eyebrows, and the wings of the bat later changed into the wings of angels.

If we get to know the history of the interpretation and stage presence of the role, we will see that the role's devilish side is dominant nearly in every production. The stage directors talk about Lucifer as the Devil, Satan, the Prince of the Underworld, the Angel of Death. This interpretation also defined the different TV productions and theatre productions on TV.

This gives a tragic dimension to the role because that is why a free and concise analysis and interpretation of the play was not possible for many decades .