



Photograph: Alan Proosa



www.vanemuine.ee

*Did You know that
every Estonian goes to the theatre
at least once a year?*

Why? A powerful and time-old belief persists that Estonians' lives can be made more substantial by going to see theatrical performances.

Tiesitkö, että jokainen virolainen käy teatterissa ainakin kerran vuodessa?

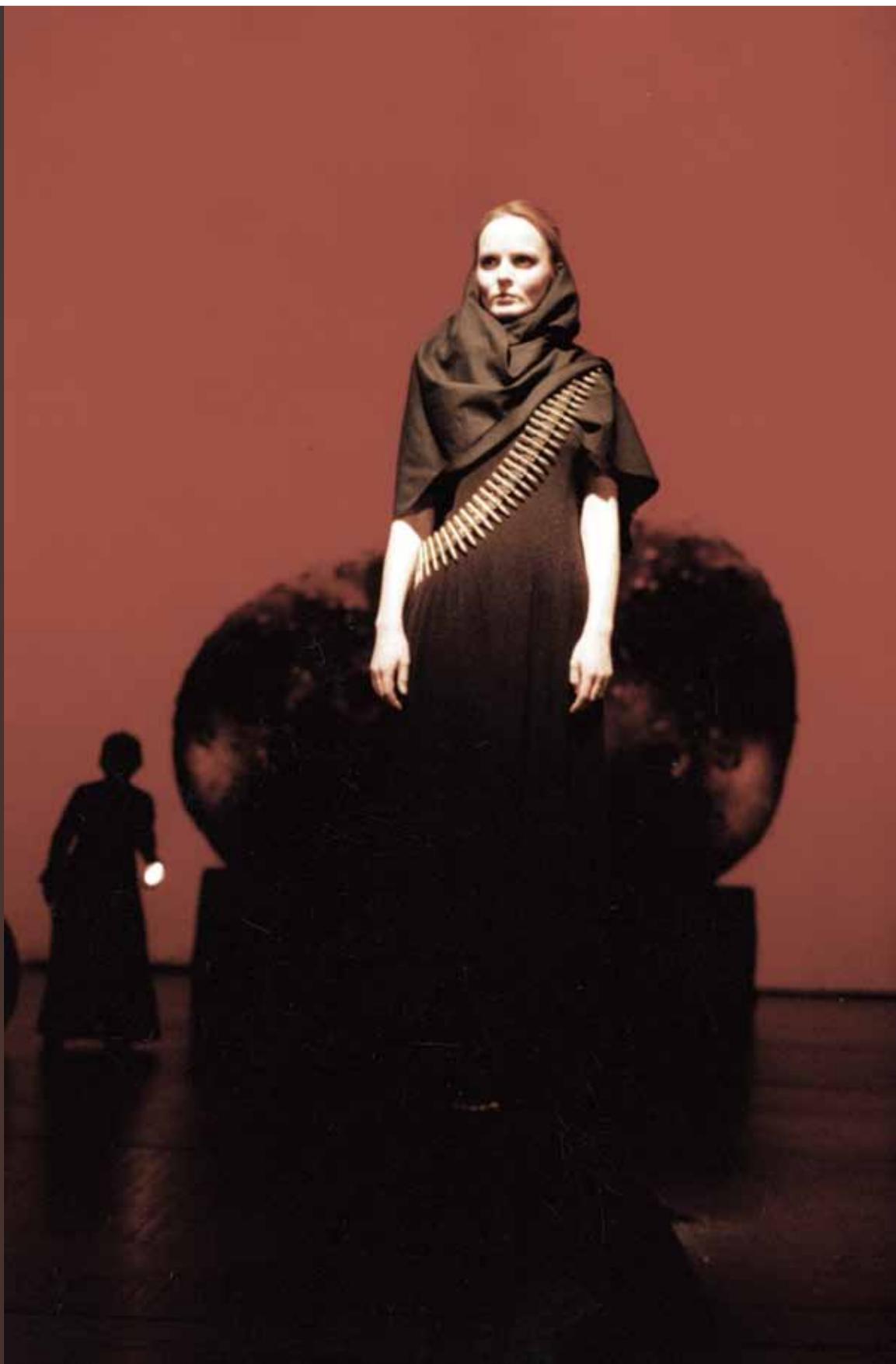
Miksi? Vanha ja voimakas uskomus kertoo, että teatterissa käynti tarjoaa virolaisten elämään enemmän sisältöä.

Знаете ли вы, что каждый эстонец хотя бы раз в год бывает в театре?

Почему? Потому что они со стародавних времен беззаветно верят в то, что театральное представление может сделать жизнь эстонца более содержательной.

Kas teadsid, et iga eestlane käib vähemalt kord aastas teatris?

Miks? Valitseb võimas ja iidne uskumus, et eestlase elu saab teatritenduste vaatamisega hoopiski sisukamaks muuta.



At the time when thousands of people of classical antiquity were watching ancient tragedies in Ancient Greece, the Estonians were still racking their brains over how to shape clay so that a bowl made from it would not fall apart.

"Brother Antigone, Mother Oedipus", tragedy based on works by Sophocles and Euripides

Directed by Mati Unt

2003

Antigone – Kersti Heinloo



At the time when classical productions were being staged by Shakespeare in London and by Molière in Paris, Estonians did not even have last names. The future Estonian actors and Estonian theatre-goers were yet to be rescued from the whip lashes of the lords of the manor.

"The Tragedy of Hamlet", play based on works by Shakespeare

Directed by Mati Unt

1997

Hamlet – Hannes Kaljujärv



*Tragedy by William Shakespeare
"King Richard III"
Directed by Barrie Rutter (UK)
2009
Richard III – Jüri Lumiste*



Photograph: Alan Proosa

*"The Fairy-Queen", semi-opera by Henry Purcell
Directed and choreography by Sasha Pepelyaev (Russia)
2011
India Boy – Tanel Jonas*



As soon as Estonians got a last name, they would buy a farm and make a bee-line for the theatre. Why? Perhaps because after centuries of toil, they wanted to rest and play for a change.

Ballet by Eugen Kapp

"Kalevipoeg"

Directed by Ida Urbel

1950

Kalevipoeg – Ülo Rannaste



Photograph: Alan Proosa

In Tartu, theatre had already been performed by the Germans. Catholicism had been brought there by the Poles, the university by the Swedes, the railway by the Russians, and so on. The Estonians watched and learned until the Vanemuine Society was founded. There were a lot of firsts there, including singing Beethoven and dancing society dances.

"Blood of Koidula", drama by Loone Ots

Directed by Ain Mäeots

2008

Lydia Jannsen – Ragne Pekarev; Emperor Alexander II – Ott Sepp



Photograph: Max Prokhorov

"Kevade", dance performance based on the novel by Oskar Luts

Musical score by Ardo Ran Varres

Directed and choreography by Ruslan Stepanov

2009



“Today, you will hear a theatre-play in your beloved language for the first time!” At 8 pm on Midsummer Day in 1870, all tickets had been sold out. Three men took to the stage, performing between them two male roles and one female role. The house was waiting in suspense, holding their breath, believing and burning. Vanemuine Theatre had been born.

Lydia Koidula (Lydia Emilia Florentine Jannsen) – author of the first Estonian-language play



So it has happened that over the past 140 years Estonians have become the world's biggest theatre devotees, and Estonia's oldest theatre, Vanemuine, has become the biggest and most state-of-the-art in Estonia. Apart from drama productions, spectacular operas and ballets are also performed. And to the people's delight, we can perform almost as many musicals as the Broadway theatres in New York.

*"The Fairy-Queen", semi-opera by Henry Purcell
Directed and choreography by Sasha Pepelyaev (Russia)
2011
India Boy – Tanel Jonas*



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Ballet by A. Adam

"Giselle"

Directed and choreography by Stanislav Feco (Czech Republic)

2012

Giselle – Hayley Blackburn



Photograph: Gabriela Liivamägi

*Opera by Tauno Aints
"Rehepapp" ("Old Barny")
Directed by Marko Matvere
2013
Kratt – Janek Savolainen*