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Ivan R. V. Rumánek. Japonská dráma nó: žánr vo vývoji (Japanese Noh Drama: genre in development)

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it uses ‘fade in–fade out’ effects of individual close-ups combined with ‘the voice of the archive’ – Kate Dorney, the curator of the performance collection listing the archives’ holdings in numbers. That information is also repeated in the form of subtitles running across the screen. At one point the curator admits the archives are often very difficult to access. This is where the camera gains its power in uncovering and, in a way, making accessible spaces that are commonly only open to a certain very limited group of people.

The strength of this project, however, rests in the fact that it draws attention to the importance of costume in constructing the performer’s body in space and elaborates the ways costume can be incorporated into contemporary critical discourse. As such, it is welcomed by everyone engaged within the field of costume and performance design.

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Barbora Leštáková |
Ivan R. V. Rumánek. *Japonská dráma nó: žáner vo vývoji [Japanese Noh Drama: Genre in Development]*

Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2010. 459 pp.

Dr. Ivan R. V. Rumánek, currently assistant professor at the Japanese Studies Centre at Masaryk University, received his Ph.D in Linguistics at Cornelius University in Bratislava. He specializes in Japanese language, theatre, culture and religion. He is also working on other Ph.D research on Japanese theatre at the Department of the Languages and Cultures of Japan and Korea at the University of London.

His monograph *Japanese Noh Drama: Genre in Development* is aimed at many different aspects of Japanese traditional Noh Drama with a focus on its development throughout the centuries.

The book is divided into three main chapters: Noh as living inheritance of Japanese culture, and both Noh drama and *Fūshikaden* in Slovak translation.

The first chapter can be seen as the most important one. It is very extensive and divided into more separate sections. Rumánek deals with the history of Noh Drama from ancient times with a greater focus on Muromachi Period (1392–1568) and the three generations of Kan'ami, Zeami and Zenchiku, along with their contemporaries. He mentions the postclassical period of Noh Drama as well. An important part of this chapter is Noh Drama – its structure, classification and theme origins. In the last section, of about hundred pages, Rumánek describes the Noh performances, especially the music and other Noh parts such as costumes, dance, language and the poetic of the performances in more detail.

The second and third chapters are translations of five selected Noh dramas and the first of Zeami's theoretical treatises *Fūshikaden* into Slovak.

The author undertook field research in Yūzaki trying to find the birthplace of Zeami and presents the results in his work. The portrayal of Zeami tries to show many different elements influencing his work, from his life to possible inspiration through different actors of his time. Moreover, the effort of proving the statement that Noh Drama is a genre in development is present throughout the whole work. The biggest development is evident mainly in the sphere of music, which Rumánek explains and supports with logical arguments. Noh Drama is usually seen as a form

of Japanese theatre that lives and has remained in an unchanged form since its origin in the 14th century. However, Rumánek shows in his work, that Noh is constantly developing.

With mentioning the historical background, the author helps to create a complex view of the social situation at a given time in order to understand the process of the birth of Noh from *sarugaku*. However, he deals almost exclusively only with Noh, leaving *kyōgen* intentionally just with a few notes behind it. Rumánek points out numerous similarities and differences in theatre of Japan and the Western world, especially Europe. For example interesting parallels in the Noh Drama and Greek tragedy of ancient times, such as Zeami's inspiration in *Heike monogatari* and the inspiration of Sophocles and Aeschylus in the Trojan war.

The act of choosing five Noh dramas for Slovak translation is not random. First of all the selection is made so that the five dramas give together an example of *gobandatte* – the five different groups of Noh plays. Moreover, in the first chapter, Rumánek explains the theme or main characteristics of the plays. Therefore, it is very practical to have the chance to read the actual plays in the next chapter.

Also the choice of *Fūshikaden* is logical, as it is commonly considered as Zeami's most important theoretical work. The very intention of the translator was to keep the text as ambiguous as possible in order to stay

true to the original as much as possible. Rumánek tries to transfer the emotion on to the reader the same way as Noh Drama does to the audience – not on the stage, but in the soul of the spectator.

Although it is obvious that Rumánek speaks mainly from his own experience (for example a year-long training for Noh actors), field research and discussions with Professor Nishino (one of the leading figures in Noh research in Japan), his work lacks more detailed reference of sources. Even though it is clear through the work that all the translations are made from Japanese, there is no specific note about it. If it were longer, a glossary of Japanese terms with explanations at the end of the book would have been more helpful for the reader.

Rumānek uses the word Noh in feminine gender as a declinable word, which in Slovak language sounds rather strange. Usually the word Noh is classified as indeclinable neuter. Also declension of some Japanese terms is incorrect. However, the language Rumánek uses is readable and the text is easy to understand.

Nevertheless, this unique monograph as the first publication in Slovak language on Japanese Noh Drama could be recommended to anyone dealing with Japanese Noh Drama at every stage of knowledge on this topic. It is a detailed insight into the origin and development of the traditional Japanese Noh Drama trying to give

a complex view not only on the Drama itself, but also explaining the historical background and analysing theory and practice at the same time. It is the quality that almost all other publications in Slovak or Czech language lack.



Šárka Havlíčková Kysová |
Nicola Savarese. *Eurasian Theatre. Drama and Performance Between East and West from Classical Antiquity to the Present*

Translated from the Italian by Richard Fowler. Updated version revised and edited by Vicki Ann Cremona.

Holstebro/Malta/Wrocław: Icarus Publishing Enterprise, 2010. 640 pp.

If one examines theatre as art, and takes into consideration the division of the world into the parts known as the Orient and the Occident, then one is presented with a certain tension (a dramatic tension, so to speak); and it is very tempting to follow the historical evolution of the abovementioned