

Waiting for... the Debutant Director

Călin CIOBOTARI¹

Abstract: The present study aims to discuss a series of problems identified over time in Romanian directing education, with an emphasis on the Theatre Faculty of Iași where the author has been teaching for many years. In the second part of the paper, I publish the results of a questionnaire that I did, on the occasion of this research, among the best graduates of the last five years of the Department of Directing at the Faculty of Theatre Iași.

Keywords: directing class, survey, questionnaire.

The opinions below belong both to the professor who teaches theoretical subjects in the directing classes (Aesthetics, Drama Theory, Spectacology and, in the past, Theory of Culture, Dramaturgy), but also to the theatre critic concerned to observe the rise in the Romanian spectacular landscape of some young directors, able to come forward with formulas of continuity between past and present aesthetics. These directors face a theatrical past that, too often, tend to be idealized, and a present from which the figure of the director as a stage personality begins to dilute.

I will start by listing a series of problems that, over the years, I have noticed in the Romanian directing education, with an added knowledge for the one practiced in Iași. In the second part of the paper, I will publish the results of a questionnaire that I have created, on the occasion of this communication, among the best graduates of the Department of Directing at the Faculty of Theatre Iași from the past five years.

¹. "George Enescu" National University of Arts, Iași. calinciobotari@yahoo.com

1. Personally, I think that the lack of maturity of the Directing student seems to be one of the most delicate aspects. The majority of students arrive at the Faculty without the slightest theatrical background. At 18, viewer experiences are random. They have seen few performances, their theatrical culture is negligible, the information they possess about the profession they chose is limited. It's discouraging when, in the first year, you find that, in many cases, you have to start from scratch, starting with the teaching of a theatrical alphabet that will require at least two semesters to instil. It takes a similar amount of time to erase a number of harmful preconceptions about theatre and performance art in trying to raise the stakes of the learning process as much as possible, so as to transmit the students a set of authentic values to relate to. If, for better or for worse, vocational high schools provide what would be called an introduction to the art of acting, in terms of directing it is not at all clear to me what kind of knowledge prior to the faculty can be accumulated. I have met directing students for whom the semantics of the term *director* only became clear at the end of their first year, when they found that what they knew directing meant had nothing to do with the definitions provided by the Faculty.²

2. Beyond theatrical culture, the increasingly fragile general culture of high school graduates in Romania constitutes another major impediment in a profession based enormously on cultural background. Worryingly, for more and more theatre students, the show is no longer a cultural product, but an easy show, the stepping stone of an entertainment industry for which, it is believed, you need good instincts and that's about it. It is difficult and daunting to begin teaching the great theatrical systems, from Stanislavski to Grotowski and Barba, when the student does not know how to use a hyphen or express his thoughts in coherent sentences³. Disciplines such as "Theory

². Hence the rather high degree of abandonment registered at the directing departments.

³. Already in the 60s, Grotowski observed this risk of derision of art and the separation of theater from the cultural sphere. See Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Edited by Eugenio Barba, Preface by Peter Brook (New York: Routledge, 2002). It is equally true that, in the hundreds of pages that make up K. S. Stanislavski's, *An Actor's Work*, translated by Jean Benedetti (London & New York: Routledge, 2016), you do not identify any obvious interest in the cultural development of the artist; the actor's work, as Stanislavski describes it, has little to do with libraries or art galleries.

of culture" or "Spectacology", which should theoretically fulfil and nuance pre-existing accumulations, often become a desperate attempt by the professor to consolidate, as much as possible, a minimal general culture.

3. The time crunch troubles us all. In the third year, you feel that some of the students have finally settled on a direction of evolution, that they have begun to accumulate and refine their creative springs. Unfortunately, since the end of the first semester, you have a feeling of "too late". Look at the quality of directing degrees in Romania: there is something incomplete in them, even in the most successful ones, something not carried through to the end. You often see good intentions, show drafts, signs of exciting, challenging stage discourses, but unfulfilled or not fully articulated. You wonder what's missing and you answer: one more year! The Bologna system seemed impregnable to us all these years... The consequences of its implementation in theatre schools were obvious from the beginning⁴, but the effects can only be truly perceived today... Fortunately, from the fall of 2021, the study programs in the Faculties of Theatre from Romania return to four years.

4. During the years of study, students miss the big meetings, those public-private events able to overwhelmingly influence a destiny, a conception of the world and life, the cultivation of certain attitudes. I think it is time for a modular teaching system that facilitates a diversity of experiences, including international experiences. It still seems to us that a compact course held by a great director of the world in Romania is in the realm of the impossible. It is very difficult for us to imagine, perhaps, that Ostermeier could teach for a month in Iași. What's more, this scenario worries us a bit: isn't it after Ostermeier leaves Iași, that we, the professors here, won't be so interesting for our own students anymore?!

5. As far as study programs are concerned, there is a certain deadlock in the theatrical benchmark. The character sheet and the director's notebook still remain Moses' boards without which we cannot imagine theatrical education. On the other hand, in my opinion, techniques for stimulating and developing creativity are missing, or are too rarely discussed. Appetite for

⁴. A good analysis in this sense in the series of four articles by Iulia Popovici, „Efectele sistemului Bologna asupra școlii românești de teatru și film” [Effects of the Bologna system on the Romanian theater and film school.” I-IV. *Observator cultural*, nr. 781-784, July-Aug. (2015).

dreaming, poetry and poetics, appetite for risk, courage and a certain way of creative impertinence – all these are, again, from my perspective, neglected or, at best, relegated to “and others”. I am exasperated by the shyness, politeness and low profile of many of the directing students. I look for signs of great uprisings or future “blasphemies” in them, and I find nothing but the accumulation of predetermined recipes, a state of comfort (installed since the second year), the inability or lack of desire to leave the protective halls of the University. Nothing turns me off more in a directing student than the allure of a technocrat or corporatist. I am not now suggesting that curricula should include Bohemian courses, but Bohemianism should, in one way or another, be experienced...

6. The almost total absence of international experiences. Strangely, Romanian directing after 1990, with very few exceptions, avoided any internationalization. Paradoxically, Romanian directors edited and were known much more outside during the communist years: Lucian Pintilie, Liviu Ciulei, Radu Penciulescu, Andrei Șerban and others are examples in this sense. In the meantime, directing, it seems to me, has become an art with a national vocation, otherwise I can't explain the low circulation⁵ of our contemporary directors through the theatres of the world. It's an effect that also affects directing schools where the international experience is purely theoretical. It rarely happens in Iași that a directing student applies for an Erasmus or another form of mobility, as if what happens from a theatrical point of view in spaces other than the Romanian one is not really a serious stake and ... not worth the trouble.

7. As it follows from the questionnaire that this paper proposes, the infrastructure is frequently taking all the blame for the great failures of the directing student. I think that Faculties should be much more concerned with concluding partnerships with performance institutions, convinced to include in their management plans programs dedicated to the preparation of stage debuts. Acquainting the student with a professional troupe, with an adequate technical staff and with a reasonably set-up technical stage is an essential stage in his training.

⁵. Silviu Purcărete and Tompa Gabor are exceptions, the weight of productions in Romania being, however, clearly superior to those abroad.

8. Assistant directing is currently an option, not an obligation, although this kind of theatrical practice has an indisputable pedagogical relevance. Sometimes I have the feeling that the directing professor is afraid of being contradicted by the directors with whom the student would come into contact. He tacitly manifests the ambition to remain the only “opinion leader” at this level of student training. On the other hand, however, directing assistance should not, in my opinion, remain outside the realm of control imposed by the school. It could be mediated by the school, with the direct involvement of the directing professor, who would explicitly undertake this temporary exit from the school. I had the unpleasant surprise of finding out how Acting students, cast in bad shows, not only did not come out to any professional advantage, but also destabilized their accumulated knowledge and skills. Likewise, assisting a mediocre director can become a counter-benefit. And the other extreme is possible: a student from the Directing department at Iași University assisted Andrei Șerban, to the delight of the department. The amount of self-sufficiency with which he returned to school surprised us all.

9. I think that the contemporary director must, more than ever, also hide a theatre critic within himself. A theatre critic who deals with a form of personal management starting from his time at the Faculty, who is involved in self-promotion, entrepreneurial endeavours, who follows and applies for national and international projects. Unfortunately, for a debutante putting on a good show is not enough; that performance must be turned into an event and delivered as such. Formation and consolidation of the name-brand – here is a subject that I do not know is part of our school programs. Including Bachelor theatre shows into the current repertoires of some theatres, a solution successfully applied in the old days, does not immediately translate into establishing a name-brand for an artist.

10. We are in a phase of weakening inter-university relations in the theatre field. Of course, we still have some contexts where we can learn about each other, see an undergraduate show or students acting in theatre productions. Beyond that, though, I think a tightening of ties would be beneficial for everyone. Why couldn't the directing student take one exam per year in Cluj, Bucharest or Târgu Mureș. And, of course, the reciprocal... This

would give him/ her an overall picture to which, captive in his/ her own school, with the same professors and colleagues he/ she keeps distributing from the first year to the third year, he/ she does not have access. I remember the case of a graduate who, during the Faculty, passed exams with very high grades, but each time with the same 5-7 students. At the Bachelor exam I arranged for him to direct a show in a professional theatre, with the actors there and the result was below the limit of acceptability.

Annex⁶

1. List three pluses and three minuses of the Department of Directing within the Faculty of Theatre.

2. On a scale from 1 to 10, how professionally prepared do you consider yourself to be after graduating from the Faculty?

3. If you were a directing professor, what would you remove and what would you develop in the curriculum?

Graduate 1

1) Minuses: few rehearsal spaces, lack of scenography section, master's courses are not taken seriously.

Pluses: the very existence of the ward, the city, some creative freedom.

2) Honestly, I think between 4 and 5 after BA, 6 after MA.

3) I would increase the number of exams; I would work more with students; I would try to make other stages/spaces available, I would try to facilitate the student's relationships with professional scenographers; I would prepare the students for the undergraduate show from the beginning of the second year; I would introduce psychology as a compulsory subject; I would try to create a reward based system to get them to read more and more; I would encourage them to use paper and pencil more often; I would organize trips to different theatre festivals. I would eliminate subjects that students show disinterest in anyway and encourage them to rehearse as much as possible.

⁶. The questionnaire was carried out during the years 2020 and 2021, with graduates of the Department of Directing in Iași from the period 2017-2021.

Graduate 2

1) Pluses: the opportunity to work with acting students. There is a sufficient number of professors with both practical and theoretical experience. Geographic location.

Minuses: few study and practice rooms (Along these three years we had only two rooms available); the lack of a storeroom for props and costumes; scenic equipment was limited.

2) The marks I gave myself for the first staged shows were between 6.5-7.

3) I would encourage giving more feedback to our shows or rehearsed scenes. I would insist returning to four years program. Getting in touch more with the students from the acting department. The theoretical knowledge is very good, but a lot of time is wasted at the expense of the practical part, which for me was not enough. Because of that, 50% of the director's notebook failed at the first rehearsal. Equipping the workrooms accordingly. Mandatory theatre practice. I would make the opera directing course optional. Instead, I would impose a creation course with the choreography students. I would do the light design course over at least 4 semesters, not just in one semester. I would insist that every year of study has a study hall.

Graduate 3

1) As a graduate of the directing section, I can say that I encountered a series of problems that affected my professional future. A college doesn't end like an elementary school, it should end like a college. After you're done, it's a good idea to have your Master Professor continue to guide you, at least for a short while. Unfortunately, no one cares if you existed or not. I listen to the great Romanian directors, who are even up in their 90s, evoking their beginnings, their debuts: they all refer to professors who not only helped them after completing their studies, but, through their authority, helped them with imposing themselves on the theatrical market, vouched for them. The time I had at my disposal was so short that I myself sometimes wonder whether or not I existed as a directing student. The three minuses: a. Lack of professionalism on the part of the majority of professors. Zero ambition, zero energy. b. The timetable was a mess. Classes that required a certain intellectual performance from the part of the student were always scheduled

at eight in the morning. c. The assignments were chosen in a whimsical manner. My colleagues and I were fulfilling them in a similarly whimsical manner. No one got any real benefit from doing them. I believe that homework, in such a department, should be given in class, done in class and assessed in class. A rarity obviously, but I could also enjoy something like that. The pluses would be the workshops organized by the Faculty, in which I had the opportunity to participate.

2) How prepared am I from 1 to 10? When I left, I was at 2, very lucky that I reached that level as well. Until now, I blamed myself for not getting out the way I imagined I would get out of here. Kudos to YouTube for allowing me to develop on the actual work side. The Faculty never knew how to explain to me that simplicity is essential, that exactly what is simple helps you learn and evolve.

3) If I were a professor, I would dedicate myself completely to this profession. If a professor is busy with other activities, extracurricular, always citing that he has so much work, then let him resign and come back when he has time with a workshop or a compact course. I would absolutely invest three years of my life – the university life cycle student generation – in which I would try to be part of their projects, as well as mine, organically intertwined with the students. I would constantly try to help them find and define a creative personality. Many problems arise right after the entrance examination, when students are not selected in order to allow the creation of a group, but only to fill the seats needed to provide that “per student” funding. I would try my best to find the human in each student, his sensibilities, his depths.

Graduate 4

1) Pluses: The fact that it is a Faculty that is still young and you can easily break the patterns of methods that are barely coagulating through the practice of the assistants and professors, who do not have so much prejudice towards canonical directing, as is the case in Bucharest or in Târgu Mureș. The fact that you can benefit from the proximity of the choreography specialization, developing yourself in an area of luxuriant theatricality, of the dancing body, looking for paths that are as engaging as possible and that are closer to one’s personal ideal of performance. In my opinion, most of the

professors, lacking the arrogance or time crunch of some professors from Bucharest, who, as far as I know, barely manage to get to class or closely follow the students' evolution, are also among the pluses.

Cons: The spaces, the confusing schedules of the various sections, the fact that some are constantly rushing to participate in too many disciplines, all mean that a productive use of creative effort is often clogged up by the collision of other students announced before you in the only acceptable space: the Studio Room. The impossibility of having sufficient physical time for rehearsals – this is one of the fears of any directing student. The lack of a location intended strictly for the Directing students, where they could more easily adjust to stage lighting techniques, to the idea of a professional show, where to help attract an audience of the Faculty, not only made up of relatives and friends. It is important, because in this way the student becomes familiar with the so-called “large audience”, develops his self-esteem, feels more motivated, etc. Another minus: the so rare and already routine directorial thematic cycles that are chosen to be studied and the refusal to innovate this research area.

2) On a scale of 1 to 10, going over the nostalgic excitement with which I remember my college years, I rate myself at 3.

3) I would make it last longer. Three years is too short; if we are to be honest, compressed, two remain, a statement that is also valid for Acting. When you have so many areas to research, when the energetic-material construction of the show is so complex, three years seems to me... a warm-up of the feet and leaving the rest of the body still numbed. In link with this objection is, of course, the issue of rehearsal spaces. Let's not say that I felt the need for a separate building, but at least of a floor that is only for the directing students. Why? First of all, because in this way a correct working climate would have been ensured, a favourable atmosphere for rehearsals, for creation.

Another concern of mine would relate to connecting the student to the new currents of the European, South American or Asian Theatre. We know next to nothing about what's going on in the world, and we tend to do theatre or talk about theatre as we did half a century ago. I would then strive to make important disciplines such as Cultural Marketing to be more than theoretical

ones, but ones that offer an approach that can truly be implemented in the real theatre industry of Romania. Similarly, courses in public speaking and argumentation of ideas, courses in philosophy and history of art, psychology... Consequently, I would create channels of inter-disciplinary connection with other Faculties in the humanities area, trying to train sensitivity and intellect in my students.

Graduate 5

1) Pluses: It would be a great plus for the University if it had a storage space for props, scenery and costumes, and of course an employee to manage them. I would encourage a project through which, in the Studio Room, a micro internship would be held that would include exams or undergraduate performances from other Universities in the country. Exchange of experience, both between students and professors, would be encouraged. Organized semesterly artistic "pilgrimages" for students (selected according to grades and attendance) to have access to important performances in Romania. It would be a reward at least as important as the scholarship for great achievements that is currently offered. I enjoyed an openness to collaboration from students and professors from other departments. Another plus relates to the fact that there are employees in the technical department of the faculty; they are engaged, creative and available. I really appreciated the willingness of the professors (at least my professor) to communicate with the student for the sake of his development, to accompany him in the research process, helping him to discover his own solutions, including counselling outside the official program.

2) 7-8 is the grade with which I evaluate myself (but it is due, first of all, to my time management problem. I could have absorbed more knowledge during my student years).

3) If I were a professor... I would dedicate the contemporary theatre exam especially to the experimental area of theatrical practice, with increased attention to the new formulas of directorial expression. I could not remove something from the curriculum because all the steps are necessary. The problem is, I think, the insufficient number of years of education.

Graduate 6

1) The three pluses would be: the people you meet during College, the pleasure of working with other people in the field and ...the cigarettes after the rehearsals. The three minuses: the need for a directing laboratory; the current rehearsal spaces are inadequate; professors who don't let you experiment, but ask you to do things right the first time; lack of budget for exam/degree.

2) 3 is the grade I give myself.

3) If I were a professor of directing and I, as a director, had to work on a show in a theatre, I would take my students to work side by side with me. We learn a lot through practical experience, not through books written by others who have already gone through the experimental stage of our development. I would enforce compliance with the established timetable (I wouldn't do only two out of six hours, for example). I would devote my time exclusively to working with students, trying to create a creative working atmosphere and develop a deeper relationship with them, not a formal relationship.

Graduated 7

1) I will start with the minuses, which are more technical. First of all, the limited number of spaces available to directing students is a problem. Sometimes three or four colleagues created exam shows in one room, which meant that the schedule for rehearsals was quite strict, and at the exam, no matter how well we organized, there was still more commotion than was needed. Another problem is the lack of equipment, which probably exists in the college, but it arrives quite difficultly and often late to us, and if we talk about spotlights... for two directing classes that take their exams a day apart to only have two spotlights it's not very useful. I'm not saying, I can look at things from a different perspective, and many times situations like this forced me to find much more creative solutions, but I would have found creative solutions even if we had the benefit of more rehearsal spaces and equipment at our disposal a month before the exam, for example... And the last thing that is not only the minus of the Faculty in Iași, but also becomes the minus of most directing graduates in our country is the size of the

directing class, which is too big. Let's allow 10 students to enter in one year and let them constitute three different generations... I think that if there is someone who thinks that all students get equal chances in this context, that person has no idea what theatre direction entails. It is true that half or more drop out along the way, but until then, directing professors, no matter how well trained, cannot give enough attention to each student, and in the first year of study it is essential to get enough of your professor's time and attention. Okay, now if we wouldn't only have three years of directing training, maybe the problem wouldn't be so acute, but in the way the system is thought out now, 10 students, three years and the survival of the fittest... that can't possibly be for our benefit.

And now the pluses... I think that the pluses offered by the Faculty of Theatre from Iași bear the name of the few extremely well-trained and involved professors who were with us as much as they could during the short time spent in college. There were more, but the two directing professors in the class mean a lot to me. I think they managed to create a good and extremely complex program for their students. Now, I don't know, maybe it's personal and it has to do with the fact that I resonated better than I expected with what was asked of us in class, but I feel like there was a lot of engagement and the class was well structured, which managed to balance the situation out, considering how many faults the faculty has. Another good part I noticed is the openness to innovation of the directing department. I had the feeling that I could evolve and search for myself as an artist during my time here; leaving college I realize that I have already made contact with a theatrical area that is not stuck in the past. Of course, there are voices everywhere that try to limit you and tell you clearly which way to go (and often it's a beaten path that you don't care about), but these voices were heard very quietly compared to the ones that told me and constantly encouraged me to find a path that interests me, to experiment. Another plus of the faculty is the great potential that the actors have here. Maybe there are a lot of good actors out there, I'm sure there are, but I know that a lot of my personal success in terms of my exams has also been due in large part to the teams I've worked with, and this feels like a big addition.

2) I would answer the question about self-assessment with 7. I think I got most of the information I needed during college, but the extremely complicated situation of my senior year didn't help me feel prepared at all. It's a situation that affected many artists regardless of the stage they were in, and students in the last year of directing were not exempt. There is also the fact that I feel very strongly the lack of two more years of bachelor's degree. Anyway, 7 is a good grade to describe how emotionally prepared I feel.

3) If I were a professor... Honestly, in this situation I don't know how much control a professor has, but I would diminish the number of students in a directing class and add another year or two, I think that would solve a significant number of problems we faced in college.

Graduate 8

1) Pros: Freedom to choose the plays according to the theme offered. It is very important for us to be able to choose something that inspires us; freedom of speech; the chance to test ourselves, the directing students, the directorial ideas. I'm talking about the first exam in year 1, where directing students have to act in something they've directed. I think that's where we start to discover ourselves, but also the director's craft in its early forms.

Cons: Professors who are not physically present in the faculty; the lack of access to equipment for making performances. For example, the spotlights that I still don't know how to adjust, mount on or explain how the light should fall from. The types of light, which are unknown to me. Theoretically I know them, practically not. The biggest lack is that of theatre practice. We don't know what really happens in a theatre, how the project for the theatre is made, we only know about a director's notebook, but even that vaguely. A deeper understanding of these seems to me very important; likewise, the information on how to create an entire project, with a concrete scenography. The involvement of professors seems to me another minus.

2) I give myself a grade of 3.

3) If I were a directing professor... In the first year I would have started with what directing and acting means. I would have delved into, for example, Stanislavski, Vahtangov, Peter Brook, etc., ancient theatre, Russian theatre, Romanian theatre, etc. Everything that is done in the history of the universal theatre I would have introduced in the practical part, about a

month at a time; at the end, each student should direct a piece of what was done that month. I think that this way we would be able to better understand the way in which the theoretical merges with the practical. At least you don't feel like you're missing out. It seems to me that we rush through the material too quickly, when we should be taking the time to delve into it and understand it. Professors should insist more on reading, watching performances, going to the theatre and discussing freely all things. I would do different exercises with the staging of the plays, I would give them different unconventional spaces to direct something from ancient theatre, for example. What would I remove?? The professors who do not physically come to the college (I am speaking of the time when COVID was not among us) because they always have other projects. We need professors, not people who are always on the run... I would eliminate classes that do not bring any benefit and add more hours for set design, lighting, music, play analysis, determining what is important and what is less important in creating a show, criteria for choosing texts, attending acting classes to see how to work with the student-actor, elements related to creating appropriate costumes, matters of applied marketing etc.

Graduate 9

1) Pluses: I took part in workshops; we took joint courses with students from other departments, which proved useful for getting to know each other, but also for the accumulation of knowledge from neighbouring fields; at the directing exams we had spectators, which gave us a certain impression of professionalism.

Minuses: I did not insist on working with the actor in the multitude of aspects that this type of activity involves. I have covered the material costs of my exams; there was no contact with theatre festivals in Romania, not to mention the international ones.

2) I give myself a 6.

3) If I were a professor... I would remove the fear of working with actors by using improvisational exercises, then creating with students new exercises that facilitate the director's relationship with the actor productively. I would develop exercises to make the student aware of what is valid and what is only apparently valid from a directorial point of view.

Graduate 10

1) I can't speak, from the directing graduate's perspective, about the entire Faculty because I didn't work with all the professors, but only with C.G. and A. C. In fact, I started directing that year precisely because G., one of the best directors in Romania, had come.

Pros: No pressure; in the sense that the student can work quietly and freely with the actors he wants, and his work not being altered by the commercial temptation of television and film studios. The professor-student human relationship is more important than in other departments, more relevant in the perspective of the future becoming of the director. I think it is essential for the development of the future director's personality. The consistent collaboration between departments and the immediacy of collaboration by the teaching staff.

Cons: Rehearsal spaces (as everywhere in the country). The production/examination budget should be more generous, but the school's resources do not allow it. One can only speak of an elusive competitiveness between classes/years.

2) Regarding the self-evaluation, it should be taken into account that I already had about 14 years of activity, more or less relevant, but also the fact that I did not come to study directing in order to change my focus to another type of theatre. I set up and re-contoured some rules of work (from text approach to performance teaching) essential for me and assumed/understood at a mediocre, truncated, even amateur level in some respects, beforehand. I reset some meanings about directing for myself, I changed a lot in what constituted the "relationship" between the director and the show. But there was no way a school could prepare me for what I needed, so I turned to what I knew school could provide. In the end, it comes out to be about an 8, but strictly in my case, particularly, with what I had done and studied before.

3) If I had decision-making power, I would force directing students to assist in specialized courses from the other departments, during all 3 years; I would try/risk other didactic strategies in the development of directing skills; I wouldn't remove anything, but I would introduce all the subjects of the other sections (even if they were 80, as optional), so that the directing student would have a wider palette of choices, depending on his/ her own options, understandings, etc.

Graduate 11

1) Pluses: I believe that a fundamental factor in the creative process is the experiment, which I was not deprived of in any way during my years of study. My generation was encouraged to discover, to decipher, to search, to push the limits of our imagination. I hit the wall by myself, I messed up until I couldn't handle it anymore, I destroyed everything and started over. I think it is a very good method of learning, the student needs freedom to play with the mechanisms of creation and, at the same time, to know himself. I wasn't cornered, I didn't have barriers, I didn't have to follow certain rules to the letter, I can even say that I went against certain criteria regarding the exams, but I was charged for not following the rules and encouraged to continue with my experiment. The professors taught us the theory very well, showed us the path that has been the norm until now and explained the rules, but the rest remained in our hands. They have no way of teaching us a successful method, there is no such thing, they showed us what can be done, what are the limits that were discovered so far, they showed us the way to the great directorial systems so that later we could create our own way. I believe it is up to each individual student what they choose to learn. They always answered our questions and made us come up with dozens of other questions. They aroused our taste for curiosity, for innovation even. And they made sure that we didn't get lost on the way... A plus and at the same time a minus is the lack of budget in terms of creating exams. We've been taught to create set with the resources at our disposal, however, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, we could learn to let go of absolutely everything that isn't necessary and get rid of fads. You bring out the actor and the creative direction, there's no need for more. But in this way, you are also a little limited in terms of directorial vision.

Minuses: The only minus that can be felt is the lack of rehearsal spaces for all directing students. We only had two rehearsal spaces and we rehearsed wherever we could, which involved a constant change of space, not exactly optimal for a good growth of the show. We therefore need more space.

2) I believe that an 8 would describe my level of professional training. There are many things I still don't know and yet to discover, there are many hours of experience I need, limits to push. But now, after graduating from

college, I consider myself quite prepared to enter what is called the job market. When you have the foundations well anchored, it remains to be seen how you work with the actor, or I can personally say that I have found that you have to work with each actor in a different way, you have to know how to get him into character and how to help him get out of character. Directing college taught us to choose our collaborators, how to be selective, how to take care of the cast, but also of ourselves. On the other hand, we lack practice in a large performance hall, we cannot do exams in small spaces only to later face a hall of 500 spectators.

3) If I could change something, I would go to the authors that should be studied; we can study comedy without Caragiale, and psychological realism is not limited to Chekhov. Not all students resonate with certain authors and do not see this obligation beneficial. I would make directing assisting mandatory until graduation. I would bring the students shows from around the world, shows from the archives for them to watch. I would impose collaborations with students from the other departments because it is important to know how to look for what you need. I would remove students who cannot meet the criteria set by regulation. I would eliminate intercessions, friendships that bring some people certain advantages and all ageism.

Graduate 12

1) Pluses: Studying and creating the director's notebook, a director's basic tool; the increased emphasis placed on the "relationship" between author and director and between text and performance, on deciphering the play, on the "permanent discussion of pros and cons" with the playwright; encouraging the collaboration of acting students with directing students.

Cons: very short time for studies; directing is a complex art, I think it requires a longer period to accumulate information and be able to actively use it. The lack of indulgence and patience for young students, I mean here those who have just finished high school, talented children who have no life experience and no very rich general culture, things that are so necessary in this field. Lack of mandatory active participation of acting students in the preparation of directing exams. Lack of financial support from the University for the purchase of sets, props, costumes, necessary for exams and the lack of spaces for their storage.

2) In terms of self-evaluation, I could compare this college to driving. In college you have an “instructor” by your side at all times, who “signals”, “adjusts the mirrors” or “puts on the brakes” for you, if needed. It’s only when you’re “in traffic” or, rather, in a theatre, that’s when the “fun” begins. I believe that the degree of professional training differs from one graduate to another, and the job of a director requires continuous improvement.

3) Not having the qualification of a professor, I never thought about what I would do from this position. It is certain that there is always room for improvement.

REFERENCES

- Bradby, David and David Williams. *Directors' Theatre*. Macmillan Education, 1988.
- Chemi, Tatiana. *A Theatre Laboratory Approach to Pedagogy and Creativity: Odin Teatret and Group Learning*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Fliotsos, Anne L. “Chapter 4. The Pedagogy of Directing, 1920-1990: Seventy Years of Teaching the Unteachable.” In *Teaching Theatre Today. Pedagogical Views of Theatre in Higher Education*, by Anne L. Fliotsos and Gail S. Medford, 65-81. Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Grotowski, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Edited by Eugenio Barba, Preface by Peter Brook. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Popovici, Iulia. “Efectele sistemului Bologna asupra școlii românești de teatru și film” [Effects of the Bologna system on the Romanian theater and film school.” I-IV. *Observator cultural*, nr. 781-784, July-Aug. (2015).
- Stanislavski, K. S. *An Actor's Work*. Translated by Jean Benedetti. London & New York: Routledge, 2016.
- “Training.” In *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer*, by Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, 244-256. London & New York: Routledge, 1991.

CĂLIN CIOBOTARI is a theatre critic, professor and doctoral supervisor at the Faculty of Theatre of the “George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași. He is an associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Political Sciences at the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași. He is the editor-in-chief of the literary magazine “Dacia literară”, producer

WAITING FOR... THE DEBUTANT DIRECTOR

and presenter of the tv broadcast "Scena" (Apollonia TV Iași). In 2019 and in 2022 he was awarded the UNITER Prize for Theatre Criticism. In 2020 and 2022 he was director/ curator of the National Theatre Festival. The widely circulated author's volumes include Chekhov's Marginals (2016), The Stage Director and the Text. Reading Practices (2017), Hamlet in the Cherry Orchard (2018), Reciting Gorky. A Theatre on the Edge (2021), A History of Kissing in Theatre (2022).

