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FRONT THEATRE AND VARIETY THEATRE IN LITHUANIA DURING WORLD WAR II

Summary. This article reveals how theatre on small stages functioned in Lithuania during World War II and what was its impact on different audiences. It discusses two topics: 1) specificities of the front theatre intended for German soldiers and their administration; 2) specificities of variety theatre intended to all kinds of audiences. Front theatres in the Third Reich were a well-structured and well-financed organisation that served not only German soldiers and army officials but was an attractive job place for artists. Shows were given in all the occupied territories and thus the morale of the German army was supposed to be maintained. Variety theatres, that is small stage performances, were dedicated to lower class audiences; these shows demanded no intellectual effort and were meant to entertain. Journalists, writing about this type of theatre, avoided to criticise it, because it nevertheless fulfilled its duty to stimulate citizens' optimism and to make them more loyal to the Nazi government.

Keywords: front theatre, variety theatre, small stage, Lithuania, Third Reich, Nazi, World War II.

INTRODUCTION

This article will reveal how theatre on small stages functioned in Lithuania during World War II and what was its impact on different audiences. The German army occupied Lithuania in June 1941. As soon as the new regime was installed, theatres were reopened and new ones started to function. The first to start their activities were big repertory theatres, such as Kaunas Grand Theatre, Kaunas Youth Theatre, Vilnius City Theatre, or Šiauliai City Theatre. Nazis were also fostering small stage performances – they had their particular repertoire and activities.

Theatre activities in Lithuania during World War II (WWII) are still not sufficiently researched by Lithuanian theatre or history researchers, therefore the topic needs special attention. A certain interest in this theatre is shown by Mantvydas Lugovojus,[1] who analyzed the everyday life in Kaunas during WWII, by Roberta Bartkutė,[2] who describes the leisure activities of German soldiers as reflected in the German press, and by Vytautė Markeliūnienė[3] who is interested in musical theatre. At the international level, one should mention the works of Anselm Heinrich,[4] Alexander Hirt[5] and Gervin Strobl,[6] who discuss the political functions of Nazi theatre. This article will give a deeper insight into one particular field of theatre, namely small stages. It will discuss two topics: 1) specificities of the front theatre intended for German soldiers and their administration; 2) specificities of variety theatre intended for all kinds of audiences.

The research is based on the analysis of the main dailies of the WWII period in Lithuania: *Kauener Zeitung* (*Kaunas Newspaper*), which was published in German from October 11, 1941, until July 7, 1944, *Į Laisvę* (*Towards Freedom*), published in Lithuanian in Kaunas from June 24, 1941, until December 31, 1942, replaced by *Ateitis* (*Future*) in January 1943, published until the middle of July 1944, and *Naujoji Lietuva* (*New Lithuania*), published in Vilnius from June 29, 1941, until July 1, 1944. Articles in the weekly journal *Savaitė* (*Week*) were considered as well. One must keep in mind that all these newspapers represented the government's point of view and were censored,[7] therefore articles could not reveal political messages which would harm it. This analysis will reflect only the official opinion concerning theatre during WWII and will not take into account other sources which would reveal other perspectives. Theatre analysis through the lens of press articles implicates not only

the traditional historiographical approach to the subject but allows theatre to be placed in a wider social perspective as well. The chronological reconstruction of theatrical events through the press reveals environments of interdisciplinary nature. It reflects not only cultural, artistic or qualitative aspects of the object (common to theatre research and historiography) but also its social impact. Thus the study encourages an interdisciplinary approach to the analysed topic and critically confronts the methods and theories from social sciences.[8]

FRONT THEATRE

Theatre in zones of war was common not only for German but also for armies of other countries. Lebovic, who analysed American army entertainment activities during WWII, asserts that such "camp" theatres aimed to boost "nationalist morale, for tying soldiers to the home front, for bringing vivid memories of the homes, loved ones and way of life they were seeking to protect".[9] The description of the performances which were shown to German soldiers in Lithuania confirms this statement and allows to suggest that the aims of Nazi commands were the same as those of the American ones.

Nazi commands organised soldiers' spare-time activities with great responsibility wherever the front was, Denmark, Holland, Scandinavian countries, or elsewhere. They installed cinemas, bars and theatres in the occupied towns so that soldiers could regain their strength, especially in terms of morale. Lithuanian towns were no exception. *Soldatenkinos* (cinema for soldiers) were opened in Vilnius and Kaunas, and performances were played in *Soldatentheater* (theatre for soldiers). Up until July 1943, *Soldatentheater* were served almost exclusively by wandering German theatre troupes. Later on, Lithuanian artists joined front theatres and performed for German and Lithuanian soldiers.

As Alexander Hirt affirms in his study, dedicated to the artistic support of the German army, German artists were quite willing to accompany soldiers on the front. This was due to high fees they were paid by the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda and the agency *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy).[10] *Kraft durch Freude*, also called KdF, was an agency for programmed leisure. It was established by *Deutsche Arbeitsfront (*Labor Front), subsidised various cultural events and also took care of soldiers' leisure activities in the occupied countries. One of the aims of KdF was to cleverly appeal "to the petty bourgeois inclinations of the unpolitical workers"[11] and thus make them faithful to the Nazi regime. The agency engaged from three to ten artists, who had to present first of all their programme to KdF officials. If the quality of the programme was accepted, a contract was signed with each artist. The artists were engaged for six months on the Eastern front and for two to three months in other places.[12] Artists touring in front theatres could have better access to products that were not available in German shops, especially food. According to one of the artists who took part in the front theatre "we thought for a while that the government and the party wanted nothing else but to make our life as sweet as possible so that we could avoid the difficult everyday life".[13]

The first German front theatres appeared in late autumn 1939, on the Western Front. Troupes performed in Denmark, Holland and France in summer 1940; in the Southern countries they appeared in spring 1941.[14] The first German artist groups came to Kaunas just at the beginning of the occupation, in July 1941. For German soldiers, according to a journalist, theatre was "a compensation, a happy and warm flame of joy".[15] Four *Soldatentheater* were active in Lithuania during the discussed period: there were two venues in Vilnius (*Soldatentheater I* in Gedimino street, in the venue of former Polish theatre "Lutnia"[16] and *Soldatentheater II* in Vilnius street 38), one in Kaunas and one in Šiauliai. Kaunas performances were shown at the venue of the Youth Theatre in Laisvės alėja 41,[17] while performances for soldiers in Šiauliai were shown on the stage of the City Theatre. There was also a place called Viktoria Bar[18] in Kaunas, where visitors could get not only entertainment activities, but also drinks and meals.[19]

Performances were shown exclusively for German soldiers and administration officers in these theatres. As numerous descriptions of theatre events which happened in the *Soldatentheater* show, the main aim of the performances was to entertain and

to make soldiers laugh, relax and feel cosy. All the journalists, who described performances in *Kauener Zeitung,* emphasised the gaiety of the shows, the possibility to interact with actors, sing together with them and thus be a part of another happier world which was left at home in Germany. Two sorts of performances served for distracting the audience, comedies and variety programmes. They had to be no longer than two hours because of the curfew.

As regards plays, German actors presented what was popular and allowed at their homeland theatres, that is plays with an educative or romantic ethnographic background. Otto Ernst's didactic play "Flachsmann als Erzieher" ("Flachsmann as Educator"), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's "Minna von Barnhelm", Fritz Schwiefert's "Marguerite durch drei" ("Marguerite for three"), Leo Lenz's "Heimliche Brautfahrt" ("Looking secretely for a bride"), Ludwig Thoma's "Moral", Franz Gischel's "Die Töchter Josefs" ("Josef's Daughters") were popular German plays which reminded soldiers of customs and landscapes of their native villages and towns. Plays with a Bavarian background were especially popular.[20] All these plays had to stimulate the sense of national unity (*Volksgemeinschaft*), which was one of the aims of Nazi propaganda.[21]

Regarding variety programmes, these were a mix of popular music, songs and dances which were accompanied by acrobatics and magic tricks. These programmes were created in a way that would remind the audience of their homeland as well. For instance, the programme "Vom Rhein bis zur Donau" ("From the Rhine to the Danube"), presented in February 1942, created an impression as if the audience was sitting not somewhere in the "fields of the East, but on the borders of the river Rhein or in Grinzing".[22]

Touring groups were of different qualities, but the press always found a way to praise the work they did. Some of the groups deserved special attention. For instance, the front theatre of Graf von Schwerin, which showed five performances in Kaunas in December 1942, and in Vilnius at the beginning of 1943, was mentioned at least five times in the press. Detailed descriptions of the performances were given so that the audience would get interested and go and see them. Dr. Gumtau, writing about this theatre, expressed a regret that one of the performances, based on a drama of Norwegians Lars Hansens and Karl Holter "Bären" ("The Bears") did not attract as great an audience as other performances, based on German plays.[23] Among other groups to be mentioned is the "Nervtöter", a group consisting of nine musicians and a travesty actor Herbert Malmström, playing the character of Tante Emmy. All the artists of the group were serving in the Nazi *Ordnungs-Polizei* (security forces). According to the article, dedicated to Malmström, the group had travelled 9,000 kilometres on the Eastern front. They performed in very difficult conditions, in cold and snow, under the grenades of the enemy.[24]

As numerous articles reveal, feminine characters were of great importance for soldiers who were cut off their families and loved ones. Therefore such a character as Tante Emmy, even if played by a man, was necessary in the battlefields where there were no women at all. Otherwise, in better conditions, soldiers could admire female performances abundantly. For instance, the description of the programme realised by a KdF group "Musik erfreut" ("Music gives joy") reveals that the audience was attracted by representatives of the "beautiful sex" because one of them had blond curls and another one had black hair and very expressive body language.[25] Another article describes the joy with which soldiers could admire "not only the charm and piquancy" of female singers but also their "constantly changing costumes".[26] Not all spectators were happy with such shows, some of the officers complained of their negative impact on the morale of their subordinates. Hirt affirms that women artists often represented an image which was opposite to the one propagated by the heads of the Nazis. Instead of showing a family custodian, actresses represented women of fatal type, "decadent and morbid".[27] Working conditions of actresses were not always easy at the front. According to an article dedicated to female artists at the front, they had no proper opportunities for preparing costumes or makeup; every night they had to sleep in a different place.[28]

One of the objectives of the wandering artists was to support soldiers in hospitals and thus help them to recover and prepare for the battles ahead. In such

cases programmes with optimistic content were presented, such as "Sonnenschein für alle" ("Sunshine for all") by the Berliner Miniatur-Revue.[29] In general, performances which were shown at *Soldatentheater* and in less adapted venues (hospitals, barns) had to satisfy the tastes of an average citizen. Therefore no artistic ambitions were demanded from the touring troupes, neither were made complaints about their average quality.[30]

Although tours by German artists were quite frequent, Lithuanian artists presented their programmes at the front theatres starting 1943 as well. This was due to several reasons. First, Nazis considered that their government was successfully rooted in the newly occupied countries at that time and that German society could enjoy now and enrich itself with friendly foreign cultures. Therefore two programmes of Lithuanian folklore music were offered at Kaunas *Soldatentheater*. The first one was realised by an opera singer Vincė Jonuškaitė[31] and the other one was performed by a choir conducted by Nikodemas Martinionis and the dance group of Danutė Nasvytytė. The journalists emphasised the similarities between German and Lithuanian songs and dances, as well as the importance of art which would bring together body, mind and spirit.[32]

However, the introduction of Lithuanian artists into the closed circle of front theatres was also related to the fact that the German army started to lack soldiers after the defeat at the Battle of Stalingrad at the beginning of 1943. Nazi officials made calls for Lithuanian men to join the army and to work in the factories in Germany. These newly engaged Lithuanians had to be entertained as well as Germans, so the local authorities decided to create Lithuanian front theatres that would serve soldiers of Lithuanian self-security units, fighting on the Eastern front and men who were working in *Arbeitsdienst* (Work Service) of the Reich. The first announcement inviting Lithuanian artists to join such a theatre was published in February. Artists were promised higher than ordinary salaries and the status of permanent employers.[33] The first Lithuanian front theatre started its activities in April, engaging thirty-five artists, mostly students of the music academies of Kaunas and Vilnius.[34] It presented a play of Gasparas Velička "Šienapjūtė" ("Hayharvest") in July, at the *Soldatentheater* in Kaunas. The play was based on Lithuanian folksongs and dances. It was considered as the beginning of Lithuanian folk-operetta by the Lithuanian press, hoping that it would develop itself into a real theatre in the future.[35] The group performed in Kaunas and Vilnius; it had to go then on tours to hospitals and other cities of the Reich. Two other groups were created so that there were three Lithuanian front theatre troupes in September. The dance group of Nasvytytė joined the front theatre as well.[36] Lithuanian front theatres performed mostly in Lithuanian cities and did not often visit soldiers on the Eastern front; that is what the press reproached saying that front theatres should perform there where soldiers risked their lives every day, and not at the home towns of the artists.[37] An article, published in November, reveals that finally there was a group of Lithuanian actors which performed in Volchov, a Russian city near St. Petersburg. A witness described a variety show given in a barn, where the curtain and the wings were hung-out army blankets. The group consisted of Lithuanian, Latvian, Ukrainian and German artists. There was a young ballerina, a mime, dancers and singers. The performance of the ballerina captivated the soldiers so much, that one of them even "put his lit cigarette into his comrade's collar".[38]

All Lithuanian artists working for front theatres were employed by the KdF for three months, with a possibility of prolonging the contract.[39] Not only Lithuanian artists performed for the soldiers; groups from Estonia and Latvia were also present on different Lithuanian stages.[40] Another Lithuanian group "Little Variety Theatre" was created at the end of May 1944 in Vilnius. This group had to perform at the *Soldatentheater* when there were no German artists present in the city.[41] The activities of front theatres were suspended by the changing situation at the front in July 1944, when the German army was pushed away from Lithuania by the Soviets. Theatres started their activities again at the beginning of August, this time under the new Soviet occupation.

As the above-given description shows, front theatres in the Third Reich were a well-structured and well-financed organisation that served not only German soldiers and army officials but was an attractive place to work for artists of different nationalities

as well. Shows were given in all the occupied territories and thus the morale of the German army was supposed to be maintained. Another topic that should be discussed further concerns artists during World War II. The question would be if artists were willingly collaborating with the Nazi regime during WWII or if they were simply doing what they considered their job without any political or moral thoughts. (Hirt, 2006; Hernik-Spalińska, 2008). As further historical development shows, many artists who made their carreer during the Nazi times continued to work in other political systems and thus served other ideologies.

VARIETY THEATRE

Small stage performances were popular in Lithuania during the First Lithuanian independence. They were mostly shown in restaurants and cafés of the temporary capital Kaunas and were performed by foreign artists.[42] This type of theatre reappeared in Kaunas at the beginning of 1942 and almost a year later in Vilnius.

Kaunas Variety theatre started its activities in December 1941, at the former Firemen's Hall (Ožeškienės Street 27). It moved to the former Liaudies Namai (People's House, Lukšio Street 21) in February 1942. The coupletist Pupų Dėdė (Uncle Bean) was at the core of the programme at the beginning. According to the announcements in the daily *Į Laisvę*, he was accompanied by three ballet dancers from the troupe of Kaunas Grand Theatre (Vilkevičiūtė, Velbasis, and Modzeliauskas), a gypsy choir, and humorists Dūdaitė and Komskis. The programme of the show was renewed almost every two weeks. Kaunas ballet dancers and singers, and touring foreign artists joined the programme. For instance, German variety artists Aida Melas, Betti Brand and Ukrainians J. Forostenko and P. Zemskov were present at this theatre in April and May. The slightly sexist titles of the programmes reveal their light content and humorous nature, for instance "Contemporary Woman", "Annoying Woman", "Blonde and Brunette".

The overview of the first season of Kaunas Variety Theatre was given in the press at the end of May.[43] The article revealed the challenges with which such a kind of theatre was confronted – a lack of professional small stage artists, venues and good scenarios, and the unwillingness of Lithuanian artists to perform on small stages which they considered as being frivolous and not sufficiently professional. According to the journalist, this theatre, despite difficulties, was constantly ameliorating its programme and quality and had all the chances to become a real professional theatre of the genre. One of the aims was to attract more Lithuanian writers who would develop scenarios and texts which would be relevant to the actualities of the time. The theatre continued its activities during the summer season and presented new wandering artists, such as a ballet group of Dutch performers Barbarina, or a German acrobat from Berlin, Charlotte Holinka. A famous Lithuanian singer Antanas Šabaniauskas joined the theatre and performed in a programme called "The Rat". The Variety Theatre reopened in December and continued to operate during the season 1943 in the People's House. It did not achieve the level demanded by a more intellectual audience: a journalist writing about this theatre reproached that it attracted an exclusively indecent audience.[44] However, the theatre was very popular among Kaunas's citizens.

Pupų Dėdės Pastogė (The Shelter of Uncle Bean) opened at the former fish market in the Old City for the summer season 1942, not far from the Variety Theatre. It was a temporary wooden box where children could admire acrobats and circus artists and adults could listen to humorous couplets about everyday life realities.[45] The programme of this venue was similar to the one shown in the Variety Theatre so that sometimes the same artists played on the same night in both programmes. Both theatres performed twice a day and three times on weekends. A detailed description of one of the evenings at both theatres was given in the weekly *Savaitė*, by the journalist J. Kirvarpa. The journalist did not consider these theatres as serious, so his article was a sort of a mockery where he criticised first of all the way in which artists expressed themselves in Lithuanian. According to him, foreign artists were probably not real foreigners but the inhabitants of

the district of Šančiai,[46] where the Lithuanian language was distorted by accents of other foreign languages. He mentioned in his article the artists who participated in the program, such as the duo of the clowns Ripsi-Pipsi, the coupletist Gracius Remesa, the acrobat Danutė Lazauskaitė, and the magician Juozas Minginas. Such an entertainment, despite its mediocre quality, helped people to survive the difficulties of the war time.[47]

Both theatres engaged the above-mentioned coupletist Pupų Dėdė, one of the most popular small stage artists of that time. According to witnesses, his couplets were full of ambiguities, so that, despite the censorship, he criticised indirectly the Nazi government from time to time. This caused him several weeks in prison and yet greater popularity.[48] Pupų Dėdė was touring in Lithuanian provincial cities, accompanied by a female artist Rozaliutė (Anelė Sadauskaitė-Krasauskienė) and his "grandson" Antaniukas, (poet and coupletist Antanas Zabulionis). The audience admired him and articles were published, in which he was defended from those who would have liked to forbid his performances because they denounced the misdeeds of local authorities.[49]

Another important enterprise was Vaclovas Černiauskas's circus. Černiauskas was one of the rare entrepreneurs who expressed openly his political views in the press. He supported the Nazis and criticised the former Soviet regime, saying that "the activities of the circus were paralysed during the times of slavery when Jews and Bolsheviks were governing."[50] Now he wanted to create a real circus where artists could develop their skills. The first announcement which invited artists to join his circus appeared in April 1942. It was officially opened on the 2 of May, at the Kaunas Old Market. It moved to the Firemen's Hall for the winter season in December and opened for the summer season 1943 in Vilnius, at the Firewood market. To prove his fidelity to the new government, he gave part of the circus's revenues for the support of Lithuanian recruits and the organisation of Lithuanian mutual help (lietuvių Savitarpinė Pagalba).[51] He was considered one of the most important supporters of this organisation. Laconic descriptions of the activities reveal that Černiauskas engaged a twelve-year-old talented acrobat Danutė Lazauskaitė and acrobats from the Giedraičiai family, as well as artists from Latvia and Estonia. But even coupletists, that is non-circus artists took part in the programme. The circus was first of all evaluated for its Lithuanian content. According to a journalist, describing the circus's activities in Vilnius, the programme did not only entertain, but it also had the mission to develop Lithuanian culture.[52] It was said in the press, that the quality of the circus got better and better during one year of its activities.[53]

Other organisations that had an aim to promote Lithuanian culture on small stages were the Association of Lithuanian Student Consumers "Students" (Lietuvos studentų vartotojų bendrovė Studentai) and the Association "Joy of Leisure and Life" (Poilsio ir gyvenimo džiaugsmas). The latter was created by trade unions in order to facilitate workers' access to culture. This association initiated appeals to independent artists so that they could join the initiative and take part in cultural events which were organised by the trade unions. The Association of Student Consumers organised potpourri programmes in Kaunas starting in March 1942, "Joy of Leisure and Life" organised programmes in Vilnius starting in September. Programmes had to promote Lithuanian songs and art. Both organisations engaged famous opera theatre singers and musicians, comedy artists, and student artists. Programmes had to distract Lithuanian citizens from the difficulties of everyday life and engage them in cultural activities. Trade unions and big firms often secured a large number of tickets for redistribution to their members and employees, thus facilitating access to the performances.[54] Even some artists, like Juozas Laucius from the Kaunas Grand Theatre, initiated their small troupes and gave performances in schools and other places from time to time, to collect money for mutual help matters.[55]

Ali Baba variety theatre in Vilnius was one of the last small stages opened during the discussed period. It started its activities at the end of 1942, a year later than Variety Theatre in Kaunas. The leaders of the theatre were Polish artists Hanka Bielicka and Mieczyslaw Dowmunt. The Polish union of theatre artists condemned these artists because they worked

for the Nazi regime. According to Polish researcher Hernik-Spalińska, one of the journalists of the Polish newspaper *Góniec Codzienny* was killed because he described positively one of the performances of Ali Baba.[56] These political conflicts, described by Hernik-Spalińska were in no way reflected in the Lithuanian press of that time. The first impressions about this theatre were given in the middle of January 1943. The journalist of the Vilnius daily *Naujoji Lietuva* noticed that the theatre was full every night. However, it faced the same problems as the former described Kaunas Variety Theatre. There was a lack of professional variety artists, therefore the quality of the performances was rather mediocre. Besides Vilnius faced the problem of understanding the Lithuanian language, because most of the population spoke Polish or Russian. The journalist regretted that there was only one singer who sang a few Lithuanian songs and that was definitely not enough for Lithuanian audience, therefore the theatre needed to improve its programme urgently.[57] Another article concerning the theatre appeared a month later and the reproaches concerning the Lithuanian programme were the same. The journalist was astonished that the programme was given in Polish or without any language support and suggested that the theatre should be led by a Lithuanian director who would promote Lithuanian music, songs and dances.[58]

To sum up, variety theatres in Kaunas and Vilnius engaged entertainment artists of different nationalities and of different qualifications – acrobats, mimes, coupletists, magicians, singers, and dancers. Some of them were so popular that they even became a label, like Pupų Dėdė, whose name was given to an enterprise called Shelter of Pupų Dėdė. Variety theatres were serving the regime because they could join together people of different provenances, create an impression of national unity and spread some joy in the population in this difficult war time.

CONCLUSIONS

The above overview of articles and announcements regarding small stage performances reveals how they were reflected in the Lithuanian and German press of the war. *Kauener Zeitung,* the daily dedicated to the German speaking community in Lithuania, described front theatres and *Soldatentheater*, whose audience was mainly soldiers and officials. Readers of *Ateitis*, *Naujoji Lietuva* were informed only about Lithuanian front theatres. In both cases, one can state that repertoires of these theatres consisted of comedies and variety performances. Regarding variety theatre for a wider audience, it was described only in newspapers in the Lithuanian language. Even if the information about it was rather laconic and occasional, readers could get an impression of the content, the quality and the attendance of the performances.

Small stage performances were supported by trade unions and associations; announcements and articles reveal that in many cases these institutions organised centralised ticket sales and thus stimulated theatre attendance, which otherwise would perhaps have not been achieved. In that way the press supported the political aims of the government and helped to arouse the audience's interest in cultural activities proposed or permitted by it.

In general, small stage performances were dedicated to lower class audiences; these shows demanded no intellectual effort and were meant purely to entertain. Journalists, writing about this type of theatre, avoided criticising it, because it nevertheless fulfilled its duty to stimulate citizens' optimism, therefore making them more loyal to the Nazi government. But was it really like this? It is a matter of a wider discussion and needs further research based on other sources than the press of the Nazi time.

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[13] Hirt, 207.

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[40] amf, "Hundert Minuten Freude," *Kauener* Zeitung, 15 March 1944, 5.
[41] "Kleines Wilnaer Varieté," *Kauener Zeitung,* 17 May 1944, 5.
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FRONTO IR VARJETĖ TEATRAS LIETUVOJE ANTROJO PASAULINIO KARO METU

Santrauka

Remiantis karo metų spauda Lietuvoje (*Kauener Zeitung*, *Į Laisvę/Ateitis*, *Naujoji Lietuva*, *Savaitė*) straipsnyje pristatoma, kaip Lietuvos teritorijoje veikė teatras mažosiose scenose ir koks buvo šio teatro poveikis skirtingoms auditorijoms Antrojo pasaulinio karo metu. Tiriami du atvejai – fronto teatras, skirtas vokiečių kariams ir institucijoms, ir varjetė teatras, skirtas įvairioms auditorijoms. Fronto teatrai buvo gerai organizuota ir finansuota Trečiojo reicho institucija, kuri ne tik patenkino vokiečių karių laisvalaikio poreikius, bet taip pat buvo patraukli darbo vieta vokiečių aktoriams. Pramoginiai pasirodymai ir lengvos pjesės buvo rodomos įvairiose okupuotose teritorijose. Šitaip buvo siekiama palaikyti vokiečių karių moralę. Varjetė teatras, arba teatras mažosiose scenose, buvo skirtas mažiau išsilavinusioms auditorijoms. Šio teatro pagrindinė paskirtis buvo linksminti žiūrovą. Žurnalistai, rašantys apie šį teatrą, vengė jį kritikuoti, kadangi šis teatras turėjo didinti gyventojų optimizmą ir lojalumą nacių valdžiai.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: fronto teatras, varjetė teatras, mažosios scenos, Lietuva, Trečiasis reichas, naciai, Antrasis pasaulinis karas.

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