

Breaking the Waves on stage

Lars von Trier's cult film, *Breaking the Waves*, speaks about desire, unselfish love, faithfulness, the bigoted religiousness of a small community and about true faith in God through a series of remarkable performances, without becoming pathetic or kitsch.

I must confess that I had doubts when I heard that Tom Dugdale, the theatre director from the US who has directed at the Hungarian Theatre of Cluj before, wanted to adapt the film to stage. However, the first ten minutes of the premiere convinced me that my going to the theatre was not in vain.

The young director has been interested in the theatre adaptation of films for a long time, in the visualization of films in a different environment. At the press conference preceding the premiere, he said that Lars von Trier's film consists of amazing images, and that it was important to avoid the trap of grasping or reproducing them. He wanted to represent the energies of the film in the present time of the theatrical space.

The space for the audience is divided into two sections, with chairs placed on both sides of the stage so we could follow the reactions of those sitting across from us. This is a very good solution, emphasizing the continuous bipolarity found in the dramatic material: the contrast between above and below, eroticism and virginity, life and death, the small town and the city.

Anikó Pethő, whose performance equals that of film star Emily Watson's, plays authentically the role of the naïve, innocent girl and of the passionate, unstable, self-sacrificing woman she becomes. Here, Bess's inability to live without her husband, Jan, is convincingly painted as almost a sickness. Ervin Szűcs plays Jan with extreme sensitivity, never forcing a role that easily could be a cliché.

A special point of interest of the production is the continuous transition between film and theatre, the camera in the wedding scene, the smaller improvisations, and the projector on the stage. *Breaking the Waves* is a production that is definitely worth seeing several times!

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