Maria Pushkina, "Entry on: The Birds [Птицы (Ptitsy)] by Aliakseĭ Lialiaŭski , Leanid Paŭlionak , Liudmila Skitovich ", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/509. Entry version as of November 01, 2026.

Aliakseĭ Lialiaŭski , Leanid Paŭlionak , Liudmila Skitovich

The Birds [Птицы (Ptitsy)]

Belarus (2015)

TAGS: Aristophanes Athens Comedy (Ancient) Greek Theatre Heracles Poseidon Zeus



Courtesy of Belarusian State Puppet Theatre.

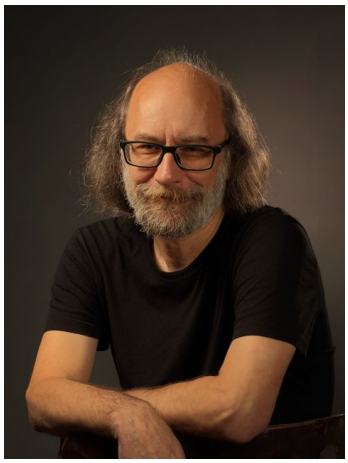
General information	
Title of the work	The Birds [Птицы (Ptitsy)]
Studio/Production Company	Belarusian State Puppet Theatre
Country of the First Edition	Belarus

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Country/countries of popularity	Belarus
Original Language	Russian
First Edition Date	2015
First Edition Details	*Птицы* [The Birds (Ptitsy)]. Based on the play by Aristophanes. Directed by Aliakseĭ Lialiaŭski, translation by V.T., set design and costumes by Liudmila Skitovich, Minsk, Belarus: Belarusian State Puppet Theatre, December 11, 2015, 100 min.
Running time	100 min
Format	Live theatre performance
Official Website	puppet-minsk.com (accessed: October 2, 2018).
Available Onllne	Open promo review produced by the Belarusian culture magazine "Kultprosvet" (accessed: October 2, 2018).
Genre	Drama, Nonfiction films, Play*
Target Audience	Young adults (High school students. Recommended age 18+.)
Author of the Entry	Maria Pushkina, National Academic Janka Kupała Theatre, maryiapushkina@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

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Creators



Courtesy of Belarusian State Puppet Theatre.

Aliakseĭ Lialiaŭski , b. 1957
(Director)

Aliakseĭ Lialiaŭski belongs to the family of a famous Belarusian theatre director Anatol' Lialiaŭski. He graduated from Belarusian Theatrical Institute in 1980. He has collaborated with numerous puppet theatres in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia and Slovenia. Aliakseĭ Lialiaŭski has created more than 70 puppet performances for children and adults. He has been honored with the Russian Golden Mask National Theatre Award, the Francysk Skaryna Medal and Belarusian National Theatre Awards. Presently, he is the artistic director of Belarusian State Puppet Theatre and is recognized as The Honored Figure of Arts of Belarus.

Bio prepared by Maria Pushkina, National Academic Janka Kupała Theatre, maryiapushkina@gmail.com



Courtesy of budzma.org.

Leanid Paŭlionak , b. 1976
(Composer)

Leanid Paŭlionak was born in Navapolatsk. After working as a mechanic, a loader, a forester, a laboratory assistant at the Chemistry Faculty of Polatsk State University, he became musician and composer. He founded and headed *Nahual'* and *Malanka Orchestra* bands, and also took part in many other local bands. He collaborates with baby-theater *Busy* (Beads) on a regular basis and writes music for the Belarusian theater and cinema productions.

Bio prepared by Maria Pushkina, National Academic Janka Kupała

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Theatre, maryiapushkina@gmail.com



Courtesy of Belarusian State Puppet Theatre.

Liudmila Skitovich , b. 1975
(Artist)

Liudmila Skitovich graduated from Belarusian Academy of Arts as puppet theater artist in 2000. She designed about 20 theatre productions in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. She was the principal designer at Mahilioŭ Puppet Theater and a lecturer at Belarusian Academy of Arts. Currently, she is a designer at the Belarusian State Puppet Theater in Minsk. She was nominated for Russian Golden Mask National Theatre Award for designing a performance of *Oedipus* based on Sophocles' tragedy, produced by Gulliver Puppet Theater in Moscow

Bio prepared by Maria Pushkina, National Academic Janka Kupała Theatre, maryiapushkina@gmail.com

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Additional information

Casting

Actors:

Uladzimir Hramovich,

Aliaksandr Kazakoŭ,

Tsimur Murataŭ,

Dzmitryĭ Rachkoŭski,

Dzmitryĭ Chuĭkoŭ,

Il’ia Sotsikaŭ,

Valieryĭ Zialienski.

Summary

The director diligently preserves the plot proposed by Aristophanes, but eliminates many moments that reveal ancient realities and issues that could require search for relevant phenomena in contemporary life. Two residents of Athens leave the city in search of a better place to live. The road brings them to Hoopoe, the king of birds, and his servants. The two convince the birds that their purpose is to rule the world and propose an idea to build a city of birds between the sky and the earth. The birds grant wings to their guests, and one of them (Pisthetairos - Liehkavieraŭ) becomes the head of the new city and starts to implement the plan to acquire the powers and privileges of the Olympian gods. Birds intercept the smoke from the sacrifices that feeds gods, and persuade people to treat birds as their new gods, promising patronage in exchange. People are heading to the new city. Prometheus secretly tells Pisthetairos that the gods are frightened by this news and send a delegation to the city to hold negotiations. A delegation consisting of Poseidon, Heracles, and the barbarian Tribalian god, arrives. Pisthetairos concludes a peace treaty with the guests and demands recompense in the form of Zeus’ scepter which is the symbol of power "above the earth and heaven" and Zeus’s daughter for his wife.

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Analysis

Director Aliakseĭ Lialiaŭski used the Russian translation of the comedy which was done from French by Vasiliĭ Teplov (V.T. in the performance program) in pre-revolutionary years and published in 1897. The translation was carefully adapted according to the needs of the production, i.e., all complicated allusions to the realia of Aristophanes were removed, as well as any references to particular phenomena that might be unknown to contemporary viewers. Instead, the poems by A. Blok, I. Brodsky, M. Voloshin, A. Gorodnitsky and I. Polonskiĭ were used. The director aimed at creating a simple linear plot that would allow the viewer to enjoy the music, lights, allusive costumes, puppets and props. Some ancient Greek motifs are preserved, e.g. the description of political events (according to the law of Athens) is done using what came to be known under totalitarian regimes as Aesopian language. The anti-utopian nature of the play is preserved. In the programme, a quotation from Thomas More's *History of King Richard III* is marked as the epilogue to the performance. It says, “Such a pestilent serpent is ambition and desire of vainglory and sovereignty that among those whom he once enters, he creeps forth so far till with division and variance he turns all to mischief: First, longing to be next to the best; afterward, equal with the best; and at last, chief and above the best.” This is emphasized by the words and deeds of the main character (Pisthetaerus, other names: Mazhakrutaŭ, Piardun Siryĭski), who copies characteristic gestures of Lenin and Hitler. His tribune is the ruins of a column as a symbol of invincibility and power. Although the genre of production is said to be *the story of the Nephelococcygian democracy*, the director avoids any stereotypes about democratic Athens (and ancient Greece in general) as the cradle of democracy. References to ancient art are revealed in columns, sculptures (incarnations of gods), masks on puppets and associative images: e.g. Poseidon as a herring, Heracles as a piece of exercise equipment. All the objects and citations of Antiquity used in the play create a specific image of an (anti) utopian country. The performance constitutes a dynamic artistic expression relevant to the concepts of the classical playwright.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Aristophanes Athens Comedy (Ancient) Greek Theatre Heracles Poseidon Zeus

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Animals Authority Conflict Justice Political changes Religious beliefs Utopia and dystopia

Further Reading

Buncėvich, Nadzeia [Бунцэвіч, Надзея], Прыляцелі “Птушкі”… [“Birds” have arrived… (Prylatseli “Ptushki”)], Electronic resource, available at kimpress.by (accessed: October 2, 2018).

Gromyko, Liudmila [Громыко, Людмила], Не ради хлеба [Not for bread (Ne radi hleba)], Electronic resource, available at: gromykotheatre.org (accessed: October 2, 2018).

Addenda



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