

## Ukrainian Contemporary Theatre as Cultural Renewal: Interview with Volodymyr Kuchynskyi, March 2015



*Volodymyr Kuchynskyi is the artistic director of the Les Kurbas Theatre in L'viv, Ukraine. Kuchynskyi founded the theatre in 1988 with a small circle of colleagues on the site of the former Lvivskyi Molodizhnyi Teatr (Lviv Youth Theatre), formerly the Café de Paris. The Ukrainian-born Kuchynskyi had his formal training at as a director at GITIS in Moscow with Anatoly Vasiliev. Then, through a series of encounters with Jerzy Grotowski and Włodzisław Stanisławski, Kuchynskyi and his colleagues at Les Kurbas Theatre have developed their own style.*

**Baumrin:** Do the Maidan Revolution and its consequences have an impact on Ukrainian theatre itself?

**Kuchynskyi:** It has a very big influence on theatre and people. It was terrible to be at a distance from the events in Kyiv. Because if you were at the Maidan you were doing something useful, and you knew that you were helping. But if you were far away you could do nothing except worry, and worry only exhausts you. And now really everyone is very concerned about the current situation in the east.

**Baumrin:** Do you think that this situation has an impact on the plays which have been in repertoire at Les Kurbas Theatre for many years now?[\[1\]](#) Do they have new meaning?

**Kuchynskyi:** Yes, in some plays yes. There are some plays that we have removed from the repertoire.

For example, we intentionally do not want to perform Volodymyr Vynnychenko's *Mizh dvokh syl* (Between Two Forces) now because it is too much to see the war both in real life and in the theatre.<sup>[2]</sup> The situation and events in the play take place 100 years ago, but they are identical to what is happening now—the same executions, the same inciting, the same relationship with Russia. But we did a staged reading of Sarah Kane's play *Blasted*. In this play the situation is similar, but the events occur in Europe, so the context is different.



Volodymyr Kuchynskyi in March 2015.

**Baumrin:** I realize the misunderstanding that Ukraine is somehow part of Russia can obscure Ukrainian theatre history. Can you explain what is distinct and specific about Ukrainian theatre?

**Kuchynskyi:** You know about Ukraine's connections with Europe; nowadays it feels like coming home. During the Maidan Revolution, we all had this kind of feeling—like you are coming home, and it was the same for me. During the last few years I visited many European countries, and I realized that I don't want to travel to the eastern parts. It is not because people there are bad. I have many good friends from the east, but there is this Soviet spirit that I don't want to see and feel anymore. After the USSR fell apart, this difference became sharper. It is strange how we didn't notice it earlier. Now we must find a way to

remove the Soviet footprints from our country once and for all.

**Baumrin:** I am curious about the director Les Kurbas and in particular his final years.<sup>[3]</sup> For example, how things went horribly wrong for him after his great successes in Kyiv and Kharkiv, Stalin's policy towards Kurbas, and also what he did in Solovky prison camps in Russia's far north before he was executed. Can we say that 80 years ago Kurbas planted seeds that are alive in Ukrainian theatre today?

**Kuchynskyi:** Yes. The seed Kurbas planted was a renewal of some special features of the Ukrainian mentality and culture, which were formed on the Baroque basis. It is derived from old Ukrainian "school theatre," Hryhoriy Skovoroda, and other famous writers.<sup>[4]</sup> And it only occurred in Ukraine, not in Russia. To my mind, each Ukrainian Renaissance is a continuation of a Baroque worldview. When we talk about pictorial art of 1920s—Boichuk and Kandinsky's paintings from the 1920s are known in the world as Russian. But all this started in Kyiv as a virtual explosion of form and diversity, one of the main features of all Ukrainian arts. Les Kurbas is an important figure in the theatre and Ukraine from this period and gave his public the same feeling I spoke of before, of coming home to Europe; that is why he and his whole generation, whom we often call the "Executed Generation" because of what happened to them under Stalin, were so popular. Undoubtedly, cities influenced each other—Moscow, Kyiv, Kharkiv—but Russian autocracy and dictatorship dominated culture. Of course, the Russian aesthetic is anti-Baroque. These are two different systems that are age-old intellectual and cultural antagonists. Moreover, I recommend reading the work of Oleksandr Men.<sup>[5]</sup> Men writes about monasteries in Northern Russia where as soon as one monk took up painting, writing poems, or translating, he was immediately transported to Ukraine because these activities were unacceptable in Russia. It is obvious that Moscow and St. Petersburg, as the two biggest cities, appealed to talented and intelligent people, but the mentality is extremely different. Of course, the Russians invited Italian, German, and French artists and intellectuals into their imperial courts, but towards Ukrainians the mentality remained unchanged.

**Baumrin:** This tension between Russia and Ukraine, from what I'm reading, goes back hundreds of years in the theatre.

**Kuchynskyi:** Of course yes, because Ukrainian internal structures are more democratic, and wherever many artists and writers gathered in one place naturally a theatre was created. In Russia, it was the opposite. In Russia theatre was created either at the royal court or at the court of some lord. Such theatres were not established in an organic way; there was a directive from some authority to create a theatre and that's all.

**Baumrin:** I was reading about the liturgical dramas, about church theatre which was the antecedent of "school theatre" in Ukraine in the seventeenth century.<sup>[6]</sup> What I've learned is that the priests and the monks were writing dramas with the knowledge that Russian aristocracy and church officials, Ukrainian clergy, and Ukrainian peasantry all sat in the audience. I read about Kurbas's career, and I see something similar because he knew that there were Soviet-controlled overseers, Ukrainian intelligentsia, and Ukrainian workers in the audience. And now I think maybe in the twenty-first century this triple dynamic is part of what makes Ukrainian dramaturgy very specific.





Portrait of director Les Kurbas in the anteroom of Les Kurbas Theatre.

**Kuchynskyi:** Definitely. It was and is this way. This triple dynamic was present in Kurbas's time. We can start with Russian theatre as the first level. This was imperial theatre connected to the monarchy. And this "Russian theatre" was cultivated in Ukraine, based on the model of the imperial theatres in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In the nineteenth century, repertoire formed on a European basis was staged in Russia frequently by Ukrainian actors. We can see this through the example of Shchepkin and the whole dynasty of Sadovskii.<sup>[7]</sup> They performed in Kharkiv, Poltava, and were invited to perform on Russia's imperial stages. The same is true of Mariya Zankovetska.<sup>[8]</sup> She was also invited to Russian imperial stages; however, she refused the invitation and stayed in Ukrainian theatre. This is at the first, or urban, level. The second level is rural. In Ukraine, Russian dramaturgy was staged only in big cities and the courts of the Ukrainian aristocracy. But in the small towns and villages, the situation was much more democratic. For example, the actor Shchepkin knew what it was like to act in the small town or village as opposed to the imperial stage. But Russian actors didn't have that experience; they acted only on huge imperial stages. Until 1861 they were mostly serfs. This difference began long ago. And at the third level was folk drama. Folk performances were highly developed in Ukraine. Folk drama was a solid part of Ukrainian culture. We can compare folk drama to what you just said about church drama. In the seventeenth century, when Moscow started invading Ukraine, at the highest level Russian patriarchy was imposed on

Ukraine. Parallely, all state institutions were created and everything connected to official church service was devised in the Russian imperial royal court. At the same time, nonetheless, the Ukrainian church remained a church “for people”—more democratic with strong connections to educational and research institutions.<sup>[9]</sup> The Ukrainian church was for ordinary people, free people, and nobility. Middle-class Ukrainian nobility didn't go to St. Petersburg or Moscow; they decided to live in their homeland and create their own culture. This movement connected cultural institutions to research institutions that existed organically. Russia, from the second part of the nineteenth century until the late nineteenth century, took more from Ukraine than it gave back. Yet by the end of the nineteenth century, Russian culture dominated Ukrainian culture. So, while Russian imperial theatre was formed in the big cities, simultaneously Ukrainian peoples' theatres co-existed in every village and town. That's how these three layers—imperial, urban, and rural—of Ukrainian theatrical culture were formed.



Kuchynskyi founded Les Kurbas Theatre in 1988 with a small circle of colleagues on the site of the former Lvivskyi Molodizhnyi Teatr, formerly the Café de Paris (pictured here, in 1907).

During the Soviet era, the USSR wanted a theatre modeled on European sources, and in Ukraine the Bolsheviks began to create theatres in the smaller cities, for propaganda. Alternatively, at the end of the nineteenth century, Ukrainians started to make theatre that was not only national and democratic, but also a theatre just for workers and peasants. From the mid-nineteenth century through Soviet times Ukrainian

theatres were not allowed to stage Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Gogol or other foreign/European writers [indeed even Shakespeare] and were rather always compelled to reduce Ukrainian theatre to the level of peasant theatre. Thus Imperial Russia and the Soviets wanted to destroy the middle class and leave only the aristocracy and peasantry. From this point of view, we can analyze the development and interaction of Russian and Ukrainian theatres. Nowadays, what we in Ukraine have is the strength of a renaissance of the democratic and intellectual middle class. This is a main feature of Ukrainian mentality. It was the same in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it is what I call “the Baroque culture,” and the renaissance of this baroque culture occurred in the 1920s and was renewed after the 1980s. It was formed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during the Baroque period.

**Baumrin:** Can we say that this Baroque tradition becomes more prominent in the twenty-first century in your work and the work of your colleagues as you break away from this tradition of creating theatre according to imposed Russian Imperialist/Soviet directives?

**Kuchynskyi:** Basically yes. Ukrainian culture and traditions are strong. I refer to this as the Baroque tradition because various fundamental things were created in Ukrainian culture at that time. For Europe, this cultural explosion is connected to the Renaissance period, but in Ukraine this was a Baroque era. It is not about some Baroque principles or traditions, it is about culture in all its glory that was born during that period in the same way that Europe was “created” during the Renaissance. When talking about Europe we mention the Renaissance; when talking about Ukraine we mention the Kyiv Rus’ period and the Baroque. It doesn’t mean that it was limited by the Baroque worldview, but it was a renaissance of culture. We have even the notion “Ukrainian Baroque.” Just as the Renaissance appeared on the basis of antiquity, the Ukrainian Baroque appeared on the basis of Kyiv Rus’. Now the Ukrainian Baroque reappears, but on the soil of a new history.

In Russia, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, throughout the twentieth century, we can see similar processes in theatre because these cities had strong connections with Ukraine. The influence was strong in the visual arts too. Painters from Kyiv were invited to these cities. In this period, the Ukrainian avant-garde emerges in Kyiv and later appears in Russia and the west. Thus, we may call the 1920s another return or “coming home.” And today, it is the same.

**Baumrin:** Is it a feeling of “picking up where we left off?”

**Kuchynskyi:** Every culture should go back to its spring and origin to make a step forward. In the 1920s we returned to our spring, and it resulted in cultural explosion. Then, suddenly, death camps and the “Executed Generation.” [See note 3.] Today, willing or not, our country goes back to its mentality, origins, and spring. It impresses me how, in Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine, people go back to their origins. For several generations, anti-Ukrainian governments have been trying to erase these origins and culture; but now these people can go back to their roots. Culture resembles a human being. It is born, it develops, and when you try to kill it or to stop its development, usually it dies. But in the Ukrainian situation we see that our culture is alive and fighting. Ukraine, in this sense, is special because it has lived through many such periods. Ukraine was culturally formed but didn’t have independence; thus Ukraine couldn’t develop as quickly as other nations. Moreover, it is important to understand that the Ukrainian mentality was always an antagonist to the Russian mentality. All revolutions began here in Ukraine—Decemberists, the Russian military, the Russian upper class were all in Ukraine when they started their revolutions. In Ukraine, serfdom existed only for a short time, less than 100 years. In Russia



selfdom existed for many centuries. It is a striking difference between these two different worlds. Western Ukrainian cities and towns all had a Magdeburg Law.[\[10\]](#) But not Poltava or Kharkiv. Russia was developed in another way.

**Baumrin:** If Ukrainian theatre made all these differences in cultural development in the east, why is it not written this way in the English language theatre history books?

**Kuchynskyi:** It was restricted by law for many years. I have a multivolume edition about Russian theatre published in 1987, and the first three volumes are dedicated strictly to Ukraine theatre![\[11\]](#) There is information about Ukrainian theatre people and our “school theatre,” and everywhere the text is written as if Ukrainian theatre is Russian theatre though these people—their work and institutions—have no relevance to Russian theatre.

**Baumrin:** Is it possible to pick out the parts of modern theatre that grew from Ukrainian roots?

**Kuchynskyi:** To my mind, Ukrainian theatre was developing in parallel to European theatre. In Italy there was Commedia dell’arte, and such folk performances existed in Ukraine as well. However, they were not fixed in as strict a form as Commedia dell’arte. In Ukraine “school theatre” was the basis, and European intellectual theatre ceased to be dominant here for a certain period, though it thrived in Moscow and St. Petersburg. There is a history of relations between the Empire and Ukraine which caused a deep conflict because Moscow doesn’t have as profound a cultural history as Ukraine and Kyiv Rus’. In the case of Russia, it went from rags to riches. That is why Russia was constantly trying to erase and destroy these unique features that appeared only in Ukrainian culture and its theatre.

**Baumrin:** In the theatre history books it always says that in 1904, Stanislavsky kicked Meyerhold out of the Moscow Art Theatre. And then Meyerhold goes to the “provinces” and when he comes back to Moscow, he becomes a hero of Russian theatrical innovation.[\[12\]](#) I have a feeling that what Meyerhold was seeing while outside Moscow was a modernist movement that is more Ukrainian than Russian.

**Kuchynskyi:** Yes. When Stanislavsky made the decision to separate Meyerhold from the Moscow Art Theatre, he divided Russian theatre into two parts. This is connected to a specific kind of energy. I always try to articulate this difference because what Stanislavsky made as a pure Russian theatre—cultivating emotions—he tore away from various roots. It is one of the main features of Russian culture, because it was created artificially on the basis of French, German, and Ukrainian cultures, because, in Russia, national democratic culture didn’t exist after it was destroyed during centuries of serfdom. So, Russian theatre was just torn away from its roots. Stanislavsky elegantly separated aestheticized emotions that are common for imperial culture and named it the Russian Theatre. But it was basically built on the foundation of other cultures. When Stanislavsky sent Meyerhold away, it was because he rejected the basis of Stanislavsky’s Russian Theatre. This is how Meyerhold created a school of theatre; it is just a different direction in the theatre. But the theatre culture is something deeper. Stanislavsky intentionally chose imperial tendencies because they were quite common for Russian culture. And it appeared in the world as Russian theatre, but then there was Meyerhold and others as well. They were more organic.

**Baumrin:** Can we take the risk to say that Kurbas had a direct impact on Meyerhold?

**Kuchynskyi:** No, I think not. Meyerhold was well-educated person. Of course, I don’t know for sure

how it was, but I know that he was a very wise person, and it is difficult to say whether Meyerhold was influenced by Kurbas or European theatre—perhaps it was natural talent or even the times in which he lived.

**Baumrin:** But it seems that Meyerhold was more connected to European culture and traditions such as Commedia dell'arte than Stanislavsky.

**Kuchynskiy:** Stanislavsky was raised by Russian nobility. On the other hand, Meyerhold had more democratic origins and was more connected to his roots as a Russified German. It is obvious that the perception of Stanislavsky is more aesthetic and the perception of Meyerhold was more energetic. Stanislavsky's grandfather brought the Alexander column to St. Petersburg. That is the main difference—Stanislavsky's aesthetic of the nobility and Meyerhold's natural energy.

**Baumrin:** Last night I met three very young people in front of the theatre. They came here from Kyiv just to see the performance *The Forest Song*. They are young theatre students. They say that Les Kurbas Theatre is the best of the best. Obviously they had a very powerful experience. But is it true that the Les Kurbas Theatre is different from every other theatre in Ukraine, and that you can't see a theatre like this in Kyiv?



The exterior of the Les Kurbas Theatre today.



**Kuchynskyi:** At this moment I can't state this. Maybe some twenty years ago—yes, but not now. Perhaps because I who work for this theatre and am from that side of Ukrainian culture—a person educated in Moscow in Russian theatre by Stanislavsky's follower Anatoly Vasiliev—I always take into account that we cannot concentrate only on one thing. We work with different traditions. When we were talking about Ukrainian modern theatre in Eastern Ukraine, they are highly influenced by Russian theatre and do not have this energy of national or European intellect. I can evaluate it, but I also know the tradition of Grotowski. In Russia they know about Grotowski but they cannot use his theatre as a model; their training system is not compatible with Grotowski's way.

Today we have such theatres, for example Dakh (The Roof) founded by Vlad Troitskyi, they began in 2000, and the theatre of Dmytro Bohomazov. Troitskyi works more with ethnic singing, connecting Ukrainian national theatre with deep roots and traditions and at the same time intellectual theatre.[\[13\]](#) Bohomazov doesn't have a theatre, he directs some performances.[\[14\]](#) The performance you watched yesterday was staged by Andriy Prykhodko from Ivan Franko National Theatre in Kyiv.[\[15\]](#) What is of interest is that he couldn't stage this performance at his own theatre. At first Prykhodko tried to stage it at the Ivan Franko Theatre, and later with the folklore band Bozhychi and the students of Kyiv Mohyla Academy. But only here at the Les Kurbas Theatre could he do this performance, *The Forest Song* by Lesia Ukrainka.[\[16\]](#) I know Prykhodko and his work very well, so I helped him. But I don't know where else in Ukraine you can stage *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that is now staged in our theatre. Maybe you could do it at the Troitsky, but that's all. Rehearsal is beginning so I must go.

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### Footnotes

[\[1\]](#) The principal dramas in the repertoire at Les Kurbas Theatre are *Amnesia*, *The Forest Song*, *Glory to Eros*, *Manna-hatta*, *Silenus Alkibiadis*, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. All were directed by Kuchynskyi except *The Forest Song*, which was directed by Andriy Prykhodko.

[\[2\]](#) Playwright Volodymyr Vynnychenko (1860–1951) was among the founders of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party, which promoted Ukrainian language literature, along with poets Dmytro Antonych and Lesya Ukrainka. They all believed Ukrainian theatre should revive the *balagan* (or fairground booth). See Mayhill Fowler in Makaryk, Irene Rima and Virlana Tkacz, eds. (2010) *Modernism in Kyiv: Kiev/Kyi?v/Kiev/Kijo?w/K?iev?: jubilant experimentation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press (42-43).

[\[3\]](#) Les Kurbas (1887–1937) founded Kyiv Drama Theater “Kiydramte” in 1920 and the Berezil Theatre in Kyiv in 1922 which he moved to Kharkiv in 1926. By 1927 Kurbas fell out of favor with Soviet-controlled ministers of education and culture because of Berezil's Ukrainian-centered dramaturgy. In 1933, the Berezil was taken out from under Kurbas's management by the authorities. Kurbas traveled to Moscow to work in the Oset Jewish Theatre where his work on the Yiddish *King Lear* was cut short by NKVD arrest and imprisonment. He was shot to death and buried in a pit, as were thousands of other Ukrainian intellectuals and artists held prisoners in the Solovky Archipelago work camps in Karelia over the period October–November 1937, in commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the October Revolution. These murdered Ukrainian intelligentsia are often referred to as “the Executed Generation.”

[4] Hryhoriy Skovoroda (1722–1794) was an itinerant philosopher and composer of liturgical music. Not published during his lifetime, Skovoroda's work was considered offensive to the Moscow-based Russian Orthodox Church whose dominance he openly opposed in his treatises. Skovoroda conflates the doctrines of Epicurus, Socrates, Plato, and Plutarch with fables drawn from Ukrainian mythology, resulting in a decidedly Ukrainian worldview.

[5] Oleksandr Men was a Russian Orthodox priest and missionary who wrote many volumes on the history of religion. He was murdered in September 1990; close colleagues claim his killers were from the KGB.

[6] See Paulina Lewin (2008), *Ukrainian Drama and Theater in The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, The Peter Jacyk Centre for Ukrainian Historical Research Monograph Series Number Three, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press.

[7] The “dynasty of Sadovski” was a theatrical lineage in Kyiv begun formally in 1882 with Coryphaei Theater in Yelisavetgrad (now Kirovograd), considered the first Ukrainian language professional theatre in the nation (therefore neither Russian nor Polish). The Coryphaei Theater in fact toured in Russia, St. Petersburg and Moscow, and acquired its own stage in Kyiv in 1907. As an act of rebellion, the Coryphaei in Kyiv presented *The Inspector Gogol* in Ukrainian, in 1907. The actor Mykola Sadovski was able to get permission to stage the comedy and to translate it into Ukrainian. Sadovski played the role of the Mayor. Sadovski's own resident theatre, founded in 1906, moved from Poltava to Kyiv and absorbed the Coryphaei Theater, thus becoming the Sadovski Theatre under the ideological leadership of Sadovski. Among other innovations, Sadovski reduced ticket prices to make his theatre the most affordable theatre in the city.

[8] Mariya Zankovetska (1854–1934), an actor whose career started with the Coryphaei in Yelisavetgrad and continued with the Sadovski Theatre in Kyiv, was the first in Ukraine to be awarded the title of the People's Artist of the Republic of Ukraine in 1922.

[9] Here Kuchynskyi is referring primarily to the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, founded in 1659, dissolved in 1817 by Tsar Nicholas I, renewed in Ukraine in 1992. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Kyiv Mohyla Academy was considered the wellspring of religious and cultural life in the empire. Other such academies co-existed with the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, such as the Jesuit Academy in L'viv founded in 1662 and the Ostroh Academy in Ostroh, founded in 1576. Not until 1775 was the first Moscow-based university founded. Professors from Kyiv Mohyla Academy were “taken” from Kyiv Mohyla Academy by Peter I to create his great city and nation. See Lewin (2008).

[10] The Magdeburg Law was a legal code adopted in the medieval period by the city of Magdeburg and in many German, Central, and Eastern European municipalities. The law allowed these municipalities to establish their own judicial and administrative institutions. It was adopted in Kyiv in 1494. Though the Magdeburg Law brought Ukrainian culture and law closer to European models, it never took hold in the more Russified east.

[11] Here Kuchynskyi is referring to Vsevolod Vsevolodsyi-Gerngros, Tetiana Rodina et al (1987), *The History of Russian Theatre and Drama*, 7 volumes, Iskustvo, Moscow.

[12] Between 1902 and 1906, Meyerhold was in the city Kherson in southernmost Ukraine. His theatre company “New Drama” gave 170 performances in which he elaborated the early stages of what would become his formalist approach to symbolist theatre, often referred to as *conditional theatre*. St. Petersburg theatre society, especially Vera Komissarzhevskaya, were interested in Meyerhold’s new approach and in 1906 invited him to the work as the chief producer at the Vera Komissarzhevskaya Theatre where he also worked in the imperial theatres until the October revolution.

[13] Troitskyi is considered the disciple of the highly acclaimed poet and dramatist Klim from Poltava. Troitskyi is known for his productions of Klim’s dramas *Sad Times*; *Dostoyevskiy-Chesterton: The Paradox of Crime or the Lonely Horsemen of the Apocalypse*; and *Ukrainian Decameron*.

[14] Bohomazov works in the area of classical theatre in a style a style similar to Troitskyi. Now, in 2017, he has a theatre. Among his well-known productions are Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Othello*, as well as Bulgakov and Kandinsky’s *Morphine* and Georg Büchner’s *Woyzeck*.

[15] Ivan Franko National Theatre is the premier stage of the nation.

[16] *The Forest Song*’s author, Lesia Ukrainka (1871–1913), was a prolific pioneer of Ukraine’s modernist movement. Along with Volodymyr Vynnychenko, she was among the founders of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party. She castigated Ukrainians for their passivity in the face of Russian imperialism. In *The Forest Song*, Mavka, the youngest of the forest spirits, makes contact with humans (Uncle Leo, Lukash, and his mother) who have come to live beneath a sacred tree. There, Mavka falls in love with Lukash. Mavka’s elders believe humans will contaminate the forest, and Lukash’s mother believes her son’s marriage with the adventurous Mavka will make him so delirious that Lukash will have an unhappy home. Leo is instead married off to a peasant woman. Mavka reappears in Leo’s married life in his most miserable moments to remind him of his pan-like pipe playing which so entranced her when they first met under the tree. In Leo’s failed marriage, whenever he plays the pipes, Mavka’s spirit returns to give grace to his otherwise miserable life.

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European Stages, vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 2017)

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New York NY 10016