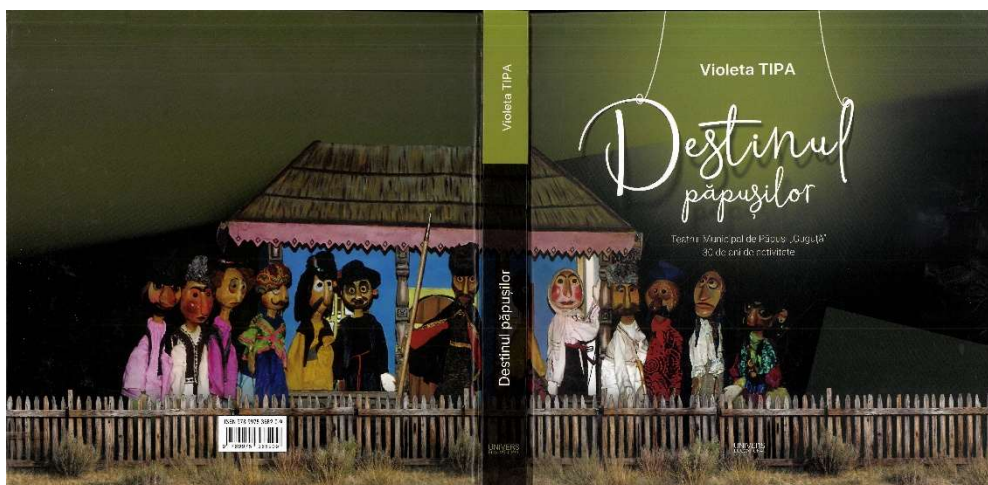


The Destiny of Puppets – a necessary story

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Abstract: In a world dominated by financial calculations, virtual reality, and efficiency, monographs dedicated to puppet theaters theoretically fall into that niche category of books with limited prospects for fame. And yet, Violeta Tipa, an experienced scientific researcher, takes the risk of consistently following the “destiny of puppets” – the protagonists of the Municipal Theater "Guguță" in Chișinău – and turning it into a necessary story about passion, dedication, and perseverance. Through these elements, a dream-theater can become a well-defined cultural reality; a story within which three perspectives can be identified—past, present, and future—allowing for the interweaving of historical analysis with that of theatrical structures and the artists who have fulfilled the puppets’ destiny. The volume *Destinul păpușilor* (*The Destiny of Puppets*) is an essential read not only for the information it contains, but especially for the lesson woven between the lines—about professional identity, passion, and the art of puppet theater.

Keywords: puppet theater, Guguță, monograph

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In a world dominated by financial calculations, virtual reality, and efficiency, monographs dedicated to puppet theaters theoretically fall into that niche category of books with limited prospects for fame. And yet, Violeta Tipa¹, an experienced scientific researcher, takes the risk of consistently following the “destiny of puppets” – the protagonists of the Municipal Theater "Guguță" in Chișinău – and turning it into a necessary story about passion, dedication, and perseverance. Through these elements, a dream-theater can become a well-defined cultural reality; a story within which three perspectives can be identified—past, present, and future—allowing for the interweaving of historical analysis with that of theatrical structures and the artists who have fulfilled the puppets’ destiny.

The founding moment of the “Guguță” Municipal Puppet Theater in Chișinău—November 27, 1992—represents, in fact, an intersection point of the three temporal dimensions previously mentioned. The five chapters of the volume *The Destiny of Puppets*² — accompanied by a Preface, Foreword, Afterword, Bibliography, and Annexes —, only seemingly create a linear structure; in reality, they encompass information that draws attention to the theater's roots, its present, and its future projects. This is evident right from the *Foreword*, where the author presents a concise history of puppet theater art, attempting to define the field without spatial or temporal boundaries. At the same time, she integrates the evolution of the “Guguță” Theater into this broader history, like a game of concentric circles, at the center of which lies the puppet theater of the Republic of Moldova. From there, lines connect it to the ex-Soviet and Romanian spaces, and from these, other reverberations emerge, born from the tumultuous postwar history.

The pages become transformed steps in an ongoing artistic journey. The author approaches the subject with a declared reverence: “Writing about theater, and especially about puppet theater, is very difficult. Although

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² Violeta Tipa - *Destinul Păpușilor, Teatrul Municipal de Păpuși „Guguță” 30 de ani de activitate*, Univers Educațional, Chișinău

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everything seems familiar, this miracle filled with meanings, hidden beneath a complex symbolic and conceptual layer, cannot be easily grasped. (...)

The fate of a theater largely depends on the socio-political conditions of the era in which it operates. A special role is also played by its leaders, who shape its artistic-aesthetic concept and its developmental directions. The seeds carefully planted by Victor Ștefaniuc in the aesthetic-artistic soil of the theater took strong root and sprouted vigorous shoots, able to maintain their balance and uprightness in the country's cultural landscape, despite political, material, and cultural crises.”³

Reading this volume is akin to leafing through a (monographic) album of a professional family, in which memories are outlined through the meeting of contexts and people, and the reactions of artists “challenged by changes in society.” The writing, with Moldovan influences, brings warmth to the phrasing and shapes the living dimension of the work, bringing the reader closer to the cost of fulfilling the destiny of both puppets and puppeteers: „Formed during the difficult years of the national revival movement, when there were more ideas than resources, the theater managed to open its doors to an audience eager for national productions and to survive, despite staff turnover and an unending economic crisis. (...) The survival of the theater cost Ștefaniuc many nerves and his health. Under harsh, austere conditions, both the theatre's ensemble and repertoire were taking shape.”⁴ The portraits of directors, puppeteers, set designers, and musicians are connected to the aesthetic directions of the schools in which they were trained, becoming an invitation to decipher the techniques of stage adaptation, a sign of artistic exploration and achievement. Chapter 5, dedicated to the present, highlights a particularly relevant aspect for the “Guguță” Theater: its involvement in both the community and the artistic guild. In this sense, notable are the projects carried out in libraries, schools in Chișinău, and those dedicated to “children with disabilities, from vulnerable families, and from orphanages”. In doing so, the Theater fulfills its mission.

³ idem, p. 24

⁴ Idem, p. 31

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All of this helps us understand how Victor Ștefaniuc's dream transformed into the triumph of a troupe, materialized in an institution where characters are shaped, stories are told and lived, destinies are fulfilled. The baton has been passed to actress Gabriela Lungu, "the artistic director who makes considerable efforts to keep the team in shape, to engage them in new projects, to motivate them to excel in creativity—she is the one who lives in the theater and for the theater." And thus... the story goes on. The volume *The Destiny of Puppets* is an essential read, not only for the information it provides, but especially for the lesson between the lines—about professional identity, passion, and the art of puppet theater.