



photo: Vera Éder

## „Being on stage is the richest moment of existence”

Katalin Szabó's interview with Klára Kolonits, Hajdú-Bihari Napló,

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<http://www.naplo.hu/kultura/2016/04/12/a-leggazdagabb-allapot-a-szinpadi-let.naplo>

In the final scene the title character dies on stage, and still the artists come to bow smiling: it is impossible to hide joy triggered by the reaction of the audience. Klára Kolonits in the role of Violetta is the most celebrated. We talked to the guest soloist before the premiere of Traviata in the staging of Nadine Duffaut in Csokonai Theatre.

- *I read somewhere, that Violetta was your favourite role for a long time.*
- *It is like this now as well. I did not sing it for two years and when such a great love is given back - and in the meantime time passes, and change as well yourself - you feel just like when you meet the true one.*
- *I just wanted to ask about that: building a role involves not only vocal technique, movements, mimics, but also a world of feelings, that create the character. Therefore you have already a complete Violetta of yours, when a new stage director comes and describes his expectations. What happens then with your heroine, formed throughout the years?*
- *This is a completely different Violetta from those played by me in the past. I think this is eighth or ninth staging I take part in, and every one was different. I don't want it to be a figure fixed in stone, neither musically, nor vocally - but within some frame free and flexible. This was very exceptional situation, because the stage director couldn't stay with us throughout all the rehearsals. We got a DVD, and it took me some weeks to work out, how can I blend this with my personality. I came to Nadine with her own staging already on the first rehearsal. I saw that she appreciates my preparations, and we felt that this interpretation suits very well to my appearance and my character. I speak some French, we can communicate well, but we led mainly conversations without words, and we tuned up to each other in Violetta, in the essence of her womanliness. For me it was a fantastic experience, to reach something like this without precise instructions..*
- *You mentioned more than once, that for you it's more about living the role, instead of playing. With what technique can you go back and forth into someone's soul, how can you leave it after the performance and then dress up into it another day?*
- *For a long time I felt that except for being wife and mother, I am truly alive only when I am on stage. That was the richest moment of existence. Then I attempted to build my life in such a way, that it shall be full and rich in every its aspect. By the way, I am quite reserved person, not a center of society. I like my separate, private life. I am open, when I stand on stage. Then I surrender to*

each impulse and energy. So really it does not require any special action, because I exist there. It is as simple as if you turned on the light in a room.

- *It is very clear when you become Violetta not only in singing but also in movements, mimics - so we can see full theatre interpretation, together with singing.*
- The good thing is when the voice is not the goal, but a device, together with appearance, a thought, or a breath. Natural device, just as the fourth wall on stage which does not exist, because the audience sits there. Let the voice be one of the elements of the portrayal. Not more, and not less. I can tell, I practice long hours every day, to make it better and better.



*Traviata 2016 | Debrecen | photo: Kaya Ariel Woytynowska*

- *Going back to your interpretation, together with the expressive power of singing there is a thin border between giving too much or too little of stage acting. Who checks on you, whose advices do you accept or whom do you ask for them?*
- I have many people who help me, but the most important is my husband who was here now as well and prepared a whole list for me, about what should I act more precisely or consequently, or what should I change. I am under his continuous control as a singer and as an actress as well, because he works a lot in the drama theatre as well. The major part of our friends are actors as well, I catch a lot from them as well, in the terms of proportion. I will tell you a concrete example: Piroska Molnár reads Esterházy. Generally speaking she just sits on the stage doing nothing. But behind it there is such a great knowledge and concentration, that even in this way she could be impressive. It is always my goal to make this exact movement based on this exact thought, and not to make it, but let it be true. In my eternal life, even when I have no voice anymore, this will occupy my thoughts. This is such an equilibrium, that first of all cannot be boring, because there is always better or more genuine way - and second, it is endless source of inspiration. I see myself onstage pretty well already, I realise when this or that was not necessary, or I could do something more. Therefore all this is a result of huge work and preparation, and of course there is vocal

preparation as well. Now a dear little friend of mine came to the stage rehearsals as well, went around the auditorium and told me, when and where acoustics work better. This creates such a situation as if being blind I would scan a room with my fingers and then I know what is better and where, and then I put no more, no less. You cannot give only the maximum vocally. I believe that about seventy percent is ideal, and at times even less. Like a good car that has its reserves: like a 244 CID race car for instance, that won't go more than 90mph on the highway, but it has that unmeasurable reserve. I need such a thing as well.



*Traviata 2016 | Debrecen | photo: Derencsényi István*

- *You sang in many cities, many countries. How do you know that the production will be very good, or just another one? Does it count if the singing partners know each other?*
- It happened many times, that abroad I had only a couple of hours, especially if I jump in as I do often, so that I can at most take a look at the production, but nothing more. Once they called me to sing Traviata at noon and in the evening I was already on stage. I only had time to watch a video. You can feel it in the back of your head, where do you find yourself: is it a great production, or just some plastic thing. For sure among all the Traviatas the current one is a happy, big encounter for me, taking into consideration my age and silhouette as well. The partner is exceptionally important, and I have to say that in this production Gergély Boncsér is extraordinarily good partner. First, I am really glad that that we fit each other physically. Second, I already played with him and he knows something really important. There are two kinds of artists: one plays good himself, but does not give energy to the partners on stage, and the other can do both, and then some kind of energy exchange comes into place. There are countless small stage situations that are not talked about, just a result of inspiration, and with Gergő it goes very well. This is an enormous gift, when someone virtually lifts me up with his own hands so that I can spread my wings - and plays, sings fantastically himself, his own role. I am really grateful for this...



*Les Contes d'Hoffmann 1996 | Debrecen*

- *As a beginner, between 1995 and 1997 you were member of Csokonai Theatre. Does it count, if you play in such a place which is a bit of home, or it doesn't matter, because the audience is dark everywhere and the lights blink into your eyes in the every theatre in the same way?*
- I was here after 1997 as well, when I sang in Attila in 2004. There is good and bad side of a return. Not everything that happened here was a positive experience, and this remains even if those people are no longer here. But everything else is the same: the dressing room, the walls, the tiles, the bathroom door. In such a situation I cannot avoid thinking about the feelings that accompanied me when I was working here being very young, and comparing them to what I feel now when I come back being at the top of my career. I have no problem with the public in general, it's inspiring when I can perform for such a group of spectators, whom I know in some way. There is some movingly warm and human radiating from their reactions, that gives me a feeling of coming home here, in Debrecen.

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