

**FROM THE SHAKESPEAREAN ARCHETYPE TO  
THE CHEKHOVIAN SYMBOL: ANTON CHEKHOV'S  
THE SEAGULL AS A SPACE FOR DIRECTORIAL  
EXPERIMENTATION**

CZU: 792.09(478)

<https://doi.org/10.52603/arta.2025.34-2.06>

**Rezumat**

**De la arhetipul shakesperian la simbolul chehovian: *Pescărușul* de Anton Cehov ca spațiu pentru experiment regizoral**

În articol se demonstrează că în drama „Pescărușul” de A. Cehov arhetipul tragic de origine hamletiană se transformă într-o formă interioară, specifică modernismului. În condițiile indiferenței și ale fragmentării lumii inconjurătoare, conflictul nu se mai manifestă în acțiuni publice, ci se deplasează în planul ruperii lăuntrice. Tensiunea tragică nu dispăre, ci rămâne ascunsă în cotidian, atingând punctul culminant în autodistrugerea aproape tăcută a lui Treplev. Interpretările regizorale, precum montarea lui Nikita Betekhtin de la Teatrul Național „Eugène Ionesco” din Chișinău, relevă cum structura clasică chehoviană, subtextul simbolic și tragicul latent transformă piesa într-un spațiu deschis experimentului scenic. Textul integrează limbaje postdramatice, expresivitate vizuală și tehnologii contemporane, păstrând în același timp tensiunile „hamletiene”. Trecerea de la arhetipul shakesperian la simbolul chehovian reflectă atât schimbarea epocii, cât și continuitatea principiului tragic, care evoluează de la conflictul romantic explicit la ruptura interioară a individului modern și postmodern. Această problematică continuă să fie actuală în temele singurătății, alienării, rezistenței față de normele conservatoare și căutării unor noi forme artistice.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** „Pescărușul”, A. Cehov, intertextualitate, teatru postdramatic, metaforă scenică, interpretare regizorală, Teatrul Național „Eugène Ionesco”

**Abstract**

**From The Shakespearean Archetype To The Chekhovian Symbol: Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* As A Space For Directorial Experimentation**

This article argues that in Chekhov's "The Seagull" the Hamlet-derived tragic archetype shifts into an inward, modernist mode: under the surrounding world's indifference and disconnection, conflict migrates from public action to private fracture. The tragic charge is not diminished but concealed within everyday life, culminating in Treplev's nearly silent self-destruction. Directorial readings – such as Nikita Betekhtin's production at the "Eugène Ionesco" National Theatre in Chișinău – show how Chekhov's classical structure, symbolic subtext, and hidden tragedy make the play a space for experiment: it absorbs postdramatic languages, visual performance, and modern technologies while retaining its "Hamletian" collisions. Thus, the passage from the Shakespearean archetype to the Chekhovian symbol marks both a change of epoch and a continuous line in the tragic principle – from overt romantic conflict to the internal rupture of the modern and postmodern individual still resonant today in themes of loneliness, alienation, resistance to conservative norms, and the search for new artistic forms.

**Keywords:** "The Seagull", A. Chekhov, intertextuality, postdramatic theatre, stage metaphor, directorial interpretation, "Eugène Ionesco" National Theatre

The theme of Shakespearean reminiscences in the works of A. Chekhov, particularly in the play *The Seagull*, has become a subject of close attention for theatre scholars seeking to uncover the deeper layers of the artistic structure of Chekhov's dramaturgy through the prism of intertextual dialogue with the works of the great English trage-

dian. A special place in this context is occupied by the parallel between the characters of *The Seagull* and those of Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*, a parallel established by the author already in the first scene of the play.

From the opening minutes of the stage action, Chekhov emphasizes the theatricality of

what is taking place: Treplev stages his own play, to be performed at the estate of his mother, the actress Arkadina. Before the start of this symbolic performance, mother and son, seemingly casually, recite a passage from *Hamlet*, performing a scene in which Gertrude and Hamlet engage in dialogue. This line is not merely a stylistic quotation but a literary reminiscence functioning as a semantic marker and a genre reference point for the entire drama. In this way, Chekhov constructs within the play a special “Hamletian micro-plot” [1, p. 229], in which archetypal tragic roles are replicated but within the framework of modernist dramaturgy – displaced, reduced, and subjected to metamorphosis.

In a letter to A. Lazarev-Gruzinsky dated February 22, 1902, Chekhov directly points to a dramatic contradiction characteristic of his plays, between the everyday and the existential: “On stage, people are having dinner, drinking tea, and meanwhile their lives are collapsing” [3, p. 40]. In this authorial statement lies the aesthetic and philosophical vector of *The Seagull* as a new type of tragedy, where the storm of passions is not externalized but contained within the hidden drama of the characters’ inner lives.

The analogy between Treplev’s play and the action within *Hamlet* is not only structural but also symbolic. Just as Hamlet stages *The Mousetrap* – a play within a play – in order to expose the criminal, so too does Treplev, through his stage text, attempt to express his painful perception of the surrounding reality. This act of creative self-expression also conveys a protest against the banality and artistic decline embodied in the figure of the successful writer Trigorin.

As the plot of *The Seagull* unfolds, increasing parallels with Shakespeare’s tragedy emerge. Treplev – young, ambitious, yet reclusive and painfully introspective – reproduces traits of the Hamletian character. His loneliness, detachment, constant self-doubt, and uncertainty about his creative path find dramatic expression in the monologue: “I am alone, warmed by no one’s affection, it’s cold as in a dungeon, and whatever I write is dry, coarse, gloomy” [4]. This revelation echoes Hamlet’s famous line, in which he likewise expresses the inability to convey inner suffering through outward means: “Nor customary suits of solemn black, nor windy suspiration of forced breath, no, nor the fruitful river in the eye (...) can denote me truly” [5].

The figure of Arkadina, an actress who lives for the theatre and in whom the personal and professional are nearly indistinguishable, represents the image of Gertrude – a mother who lives by the rules of art rather than morality. Her attachment to Trigorin – elusive, pragmatic, and charming – calls to mind the image of Claudius, a man of action capable of adapting to circumstances. The image of Nina, a fragile and dreamy girl hopelessly in love with Trigorin and tragically broken under the weight of unfulfilled hopes, resonates with that of Ophelia. Just as Ophelia becomes a victim of internal conflict and external manipulation, so too does Nina become a casualty of a system in which art and emotion are subjugated to vanity and cold indifference.

Contemporary theatre criticism highlights the tragic mode of *The Seagull*, constantly activated and at the same time problematized through Shakespearean reminiscences. As L. Artemyeva notes: “The suicide at the end of the play turns out to be the only successful act of the protagonist, which actualizes the tragic mode, constantly recalled and simultaneously undermined through Shakespearean references” [1, p. 229]. Thus, Treplev’s final act is not merely one of despair, but perhaps the only attempt to achieve a subjective self in a world that has lost its values.

In turn, A. Neminushchy, analyzing Chekhov’s interpretation of the Hamletian plot, emphasizes its alignment with the crisis consciousness of the turn of the century: “These explorations reflect a desire to analyze the most general miscalculations and errors in the choice of existential perspective on the level of ‘average’ and mass consciousness, the self-perception of a person in a time of crisis” [2, p. 119]. The play *The Seagull*, written in 1895-1896, becomes a sensitive reflection of the spiritual atmosphere at the close of the 19th century. It conveys a foreboding of impending crisis – both artistic and existential. Its characters find themselves in a space of spiritual vacuum, where the individual is incapable of resisting the indifferent forces of life. This play, rich in symbolic imagery alluding to tragic archetypes and fates, has retained its relevance for over a century, serving as a stage metaphor for the tragedy of human dislocation. It continues to allure with its mystery, becoming a subject of scholarly interpretation and directorial vision, striving to penetrate the enigma of inner disintegration concealed beneath external banality.

In 2024, the theatre invited Nikita Betekhtin, a graduate of the directing department of GITIS (workshop of Leonid Kheifets) and the master's program of the Moscow Art Theatre School (course of Viktor Ryzhakov), to stage *The Seagull* by A. Chekhov. This production, staged at the "Eugène Ionesco" Theatre, became a landmark event of the theatrical season, marking a return to Chekhov's play after thirty years since the previous version was produced at the same theatre by director Mihai Fusu. In this new interpretation of the classic text, Betekhtin presents a contemporary view of Chekhov's dramaturgy, employing postdramatic strategies and new theatrical forms characteristic of young directors focused on decentralizing dramatic text and enhancing the visual-performative component of the performance.

Director N. Betekhtin clearly departs from the traditional psychological school of interpreting Chekhov's drama, replacing it with metaphor, symbolism, and a visual-associative sequence in accordance with the principles of postdramatic theatre. His postdramatic aesthetic and directorial concept focus less on plot and character development than on atmosphere, the dynamics of stage action, and the multidimensionality of meaning that arises from the synthesis of the various semi-otic systems within the performance.

One of the key devices used in the production is the modernization of the play's context, evident in the scenography and costume design (scenography and costumes by Denis Sazonov). These elements serve to create an effect of actualization, bringing Chekhov's characters closer to the contemporary viewer. The visual dimension of the production is built on a contrast between tradition and modernity, reflecting the central conflict of the play – the clash between old and new art, obsolete artistic forms, and the search for a contemporary theatrical language.

The scenography plays a significant dramaturgical role in the performance, creating a vivid spatial modeling of the stage environment. The action unfolds in an enclosed, isolated world of a country estate, where towering wooden fences become a visual allusion to the alienation and detachment of the characters from the vibrant urban world. This stage image not only emphasizes the isolation of the play's world but also symbolizes the rigid boundaries within which the characters find themselves – unable to escape the closed circle of their suffering, emotional turmoil, and unfulfilled hopes.

A particularly striking stage symbol is the lone, withered pine tree, its crown rising above the proscenium arch. Its barren branches and complete lack of needles become a visual metaphor for decline, the inevitability of time, and the fading of artistic and human ideals. This image reflects a post-Chekhovian philosophy that underscores the fragility of existence and the impossibility of artistic evolution without the destruction of previous forms. This concept finds particularly expressive realization in the opening episode of the production, when Treplev (Silviu Boinceanu) takes an axe and, with several strikes, fells the pine tree. This powerful gesture not only symbolizes a break with the past and a desire to destroy outdated aesthetic canons but also becomes a performative act, wherein the very process of destroying the tree is transformed into a stage action imbued with ritualistic, purifying significance. In this way, the director introduces elements of gesture theatre into the production, where action acquires conceptual meaning and transcends the boundaries of traditional mimetic play characteristic of realist theatre. This device contributes to the development of the production's metaphorical language, creating a strong visual-dramaturgical structure in which the physical destruction of the pine is interpreted as an act of existential and artistic choice on the part of the protagonist.

Another significant feature of the production is the use of modern technocratic devices integrated into the scenography and props. This technique likewise serves the function of actualization, transferring the play's conflict into the context of the digital age. The production includes screens and projection systems that allow for dynamic scenographic solutions, varying the performance space and emphasizing its transformative nature.

These visual tools serve not merely as background but carry semantic weight: they become part of the performance's world, marking different levels of reality, the internal states of the characters, and metaphorically representing the search for a new theatrical language that Treplev speaks of. One can argue that in this production, Chekhov's text is refracted through a performative lens, where the traditional structure of dramatic action gives way to a theatre of images, symbols, and spectacular metaphors.

In N. Betekhtin's stage interpretation, constructed on a metaphorical reading of Chekhov's

text, the image of the felled, decayed pine takes center stage, becoming the key spatial-symbolic dominant of the production. The use of this scenographic element acquires multifaceted semantic depth, functioning simultaneously as a visual symbol, a performative object, and a structural element of the director's concept.

Throughout the famous scene of Treplev's play presentation, the characters sit with their backs to the audience, positioned on the fallen trunk of the dried-out pine. This stage arrangement emphasizes not only their detachment and skepticism but also metaphorically anchors their belonging to the world of stagnant, hollow artistic tradition, persisting merely by inertia. Thus, Betekhtin embeds a spatial commentary into the *mise-en-scène*, addressing the play's central conflict – the confrontation between living, searching art and outdated, ossified aesthetics that can no longer produce anything new, yet still lay claim to dominance.

A further symbolic moment of the stage action unfolds as Treplev's play collapses under Arkadina's pressure: estate workers remove the felled pine to saw it into pieces – an act interpretable as the destruction of the remnants of the old theatre, a final attempt to rid oneself of its burdensome legacy. However, in Act II, the audience witnesses a paradoxical stage decision: in place of the destroyed tree appears an exact replica, installed at the very center of the stage space.

This directorial device alludes to the concept of cyclicity, the inevitability of returning to tradition – albeit now in its parodic, hollowed-out form. In this context, one can speak of the effect of stage inversion, wherein the deconstruction of an old artistic form does not lead to its disappearance but rather to its renewed turn in an even more grotesque and static incarnation. Thus, the routine purveyors of the status quo, once “crushed” under the blows of new art, again and again reclaim central positions, asserting their monopoly on artistic truth.

Personified symbolism in the production: the image of the dried, dead pine also becomes a personalized symbol, finding direct analogy in the figure of Arkadina (Yulia Bordinu). N. Betekhtin purposefully juxtaposes the obsolete art represented by her character with aesthetic aging – the loss of organicity and natural vitality. In his interpretation, Arkadina appears bald, depersonalized, devoid of inner dynamism – her image rendered

as grotesque, hollow, and faded, the empty shell of a once-significant figure. It is important to note that the director employs theatrical hyperbole, amplifying the aged, weakened yet still egotistical nature of the heroine not only through the actor's expressiveness but also through visual means. Hence, her “barren” body, incapable of producing anything new, may be likened to the decaying tree – once alive, strong, meaningful, but now empty inside, rotting, and fragile.

Particular irony is introduced into this comparison through the decorative element: just as the lifeless tree is pointlessly adorned with garlands to create an illusion of life and beauty, so too does Arkadina mask her artistic barrenness, attempting to preserve her status as a great actress. This is an allusion to theatrical deception, for Arkadina is a figure who lives within the theatre as an artificial reality yet is incapable of genuine creativity. The director demonstrates that these “fortified” bastions of art, frozen in a soulless pose, retain their grip on power and status, displacing that which is new, living, and authentic. In this reading, *The Seagull* becomes not merely a story of unfulfilled love and crushed hopes but a manifesto on the struggle for art itself – in which reformers are defeated by the artificial grandeur of the conservative mastodons of the theatrical world.

Thus, the spatial symbolism of the production, built around the image of the withered pine, not only complements the overall concept of the performance but becomes its most important semantic metaphor, embodying the artistic confrontation between tradition and innovation. Through this motif, N. Betekhtin vividly demonstrates the mechanisms of routine art, which, despite its evident profanation, continues to occupy key positions in the theatrical hierarchy.

The visual-scenographic techniques employed by the director provide the production with a profound philosophical subtext, transforming it into an aesthetically complex stage statement, in which set design, costume, *mise-en-scène*, and acting coalesce into a unified dramaturgical system of meanings. This approach allows the audience not only to emotionally experience the events of the play but also to reflect on the nature of theatre itself – its mechanisms of power, the formation and loss of creative force.

The figure of Konstantin Treplev acquires in the production an expanded metaphorical interpretation, in which his fate closely intertwines with

the image of the slain seagull, becoming a stage embodiment of the broken, rejected artist crushed by the cruelty and indifference of the surrounding world. The director shapes the psychological and physical portrayal of the role in such a way that Treplev appears before the audience not as a romantic rebel but as a man doomed to unbearable loneliness. From the very beginning, he is immersed in a state of constant inner tension, anxiety, and a sense of detachment from both the theatrical and the life process. His existential disorientation, the constant struggle between the desire for recognition and total alienation, between idealistic striving and the inevitable collapse of dreams, become the through-lines of his stage existence.

The culmination of this inner conflict is reached in the emblematic scene in which Treplev brings the seagull he has killed to Nina (Marina Rotaru). This is a key moment of the production, in which the actor's score reaches its highest degree of intensity. His physical state – emaciated, gaunt body, stained with blood and dirt, trembling hands, labored breathing, restless, darting gaze – transforms into a powerful stage image of a man driven to the limit by despair and helplessness. Here, the director employs the device of somatic expression of emotional crisis, where the character's psychological condition is conveyed through his physical exhaustion and distorted movement plasticity.

This moment simultaneously constitutes a performative act, in which the killing of the seagull acquires ritual significance, serving as a harbinger of the impending tragedy. The blood of the slain bird becomes a visual metaphor for a shattered dream, the destruction of freedom, and the irretrievability of hope. The dead seagull brought on stage contains a meaningful theatrical allusion. On a personal level: the seagull is Treplev himself. A bright, defenseless soul longing to soar is mercilessly cast into the abyss of misunderstanding and indifference. On a spiritual level: the seagull represents his feeling for Nina Zarechnaya, which was not reciprocated and is thus doomed. On an artistic level: the seagull symbolizes his art, his search for new forms, which are crushed by the realities of a cynical, soulless theatrical world.

In the final part of the production, the audience witnesses the complete transformation of the symbol into a sign of stasis and death – the slain seagull becomes encased in transparent resin. This device imparts a new semantic dimension

to the image: a once-living bird, once aspiring to the sky, is now transformed into a frozen artifact, a museum exhibit, stripped of motion and life. This can be interpreted as the final fixation of Treplev's tragedy: he has failed to preserve his love, his freedom, and his dream – he, like the seagull, has become trapped by circumstances, confined in hopelessness, where there is no air, no movement, no life.

Thus, N. Betekhtin's directorial concept is built on deep theatrical metaphors, embodied on stage through objects, visual and physical solutions, and the actor's psychological score. The image of the seagull becomes not only a symbol of the collapse of ideals but also a powerful theatrical sign through which the dramatic conflict between dream and reality, between creativity and the destructive force of indifference, is revealed. In Nikita Betekhtin's production, the theme of loneliness becomes the existential leitmotif of the performance. Rejection and the pain of unrequited love become not only the central theme but acquire ontological significance, transcending the personal experiences of the characters and gaining a universal human dimension. The director does not address this problem exclusively within the context of romantic drama in Chekhov's play, but expands it into the scale of universal human experience, compelling the audience to reflect on the nature of alienation, the impossibility of dialogue, and the total disconnection between individuals in the modern world.

In Betekhtin's interpretation, each character embodies a unique form of loneliness, yet all are united by the overarching theme of an unbridgeable chasm between themselves and others. In this way, the director constructs a complex theatrical system in which human solitude is manifested not only through the psychological profiles of the characters, but also through spatial decisions, the rhythmic structure of stage action, musical-dramaturgical insertions, and intertextual elements.

A particularly significant theatrical solution is the use of intertextuality as a method for expanding the semantic field of the production, employed in the scene featuring the reading of the poem *Loneliness* by Eugeniu Cioclea. In the performance by Andrei Sokircă (Dorn), the poem acquires an additional theatrical dimension, transforming into a performative act in which word, sound, and tempo-rhythm coalesce to form an emotional wave of impact upon the audience.

The use of poetic text within the dramatic action here serves multiple functions: it is a semantic reference, as the poetry of E. Cioclea, a contemporary poet, actualizes Chekhov's theme of loneliness, providing it with a new temporal layer, thereby drawing a parallel between the 19th and 21st centuries; it functions as a musical-dramaturgical accent, since the poem is delivered as a form of melodeclimation, creating an additional sonic dimension to the performance; it also conveys emotional expression through musical accompaniment: a modern composition evoking the aesthetics of rock music intensifies the stage's emotional impact. The jagged, tense rhythm, emphasized pauses, and abrupt transitions between the spoken verses and musical chords produce a state of mounting inner conflict, transmitted to the audience on a subconscious level.

The musical arrangement in this episode serves an expressive and metaphorical function, becoming not merely background sound, but a dramaturgically precise component of the stage's structural whole. The rock genre is chosen deliberately, as it is a music of inner rebellion and existential quest, ideally matching the emotional states of the production's characters. It is also a music of contrast, contradiction, anxiety, and fragmentation, which amplifies the perception of the theme of incommunicability and painful isolation of the individual – a music of a generation experiencing an identity crisis, which resonates with the theme of Treplev's artistic search.

Thus, the director creates a moment of ultimate artistic generalization, where lyrical text, the actor's melodeclimation, and the musical score are interwoven into a unified emotional fabric, intensifying the perception of loneliness as an existential inevitability.

The finale of N. Betekhtin's production becomes the culmination of a metaphorical and postdramatic reading of Chekhov's play. Unlike traditional stagings, where Treplev's suicide scene is played as an emotionally charged climax, here the director eschews excessive psychological mimesis and creates a laconic, precise, and detached conclusion, resonating with the aesthetics of cinematic surrealism and theatrical minimalism.

In the background of the stage, a video projection unfolds, stylized after the experimental cinema of early avant-gardists, artistically reminiscent of films by creators such as Man Ray, who explored the themes of love and death, their in-

terpenetration and inseparability. This cinematic citation layer becomes a reference to the very "new forms" Treplev speaks of, rendering the finale an intermedial space where theatre and cinema merge into a unified artistic fabric.

Importantly, the image of Nina Zarechnaya is ever-present in this video sequence. Her face is projected – at times clearly, at others indistinctly – emerging in motion, like an obsessive, painful vision from which Treplev cannot escape. In this way, his inner world is materialized in the stage space – the audience literally sees how the protagonist becomes a prisoner of his unresolved love, of his own past. The entire stage finale is built on restrained yet expressive visual symbols through which the tragic inevitability of what is happening is conveyed.

Only one character is present on stage – Konstantin Treplev. At his feet stands a transparent rectangular block of resin, in which, like an artifact sealed in amber, the body of the seagull he has killed is encased. This scenographic element becomes a key visual metaphor – the materialization of time, death, and frozen suffering. The director intensifies the moment of alienation and emotional isolation of the character by removing the traditional dialogue between Nina and Treplev. Instead of live interaction, the audience hears a tape recording of their final encounter. The playback of this sound, disconnected from live performance, creates the impression of a sealed past that cannot be altered. The recorded voice sounds unresponsive, immutable, predictable – amplifying the sense of emptiness and hopelessness. The absence of the final dialogue scene lays bare the structure of the play itself, transforming it into a fragmented memory governed by Treplev.

The sound of the recorded voice becomes the only remaining link between Treplev and his past, but even that connection is severed. At the moment he places the recorder on the resin block containing the dead seagull, the director stages the final assertion of the impossibility of reconciling two worlds – the world of living art and the dead symbol, the world of love and the memory of it.

After Treplev exits through the auditorium, nothing further happens on stage – silence, suspended time, a cessation of action. The video sequence continues to pulse on screen, the tape recording plays, but the protagonist is no longer present. Chekhov's device produces a powerful

effect: no one witnesses Treplev's death, no one sees the act of suicide itself – only a dull gunshot is heard, coming from beyond the audience area, somewhere near the foyer.

The spectator does not become a participant in catharsis but merely records the outcome of the event. However, the director goes even further, revealing the horror of what has occurred not in the moment of death itself, but in the reaction of those around it. Following the gunshot, all the household members rush onto the stage, but the audience sees that their responses are scattered and fragmented – this is not an outburst of emotion but rather the chaotic movement of people caught off guard by something they do not fully comprehend. Especially expressive is the moment when Masha, obeying a foreboding of the tragedy, throws herself toward the place of Treplev's death, and seconds later, her piercing scream is heard from a distance. This is not merely a cry of grief, but a sound resembling the scream of a mortally wounded animal – an absolute, embodied pain that stands in sharp contrast to the mechanistic reactions of the other characters.

A crucial directorial emphasis is that Arkadina remains alone on stage. Unlike the others, she does not rush to the site where her son has died. She stands in the center of a dark space, illuminated by a single spotlight, while opposite her, in another beam of light, lies the dead seagull encased in transparent resin. This final *mise-en-scène* creates a powerful theatrical metaphor: Arkadina, her motionless figure at the center of the stage, is the embodiment of indifference – an aestheticized, cruel world of art that exists autonomously, blind to the suffering of those who create it. The seagull in resin is a frozen symbol of the creative individual, crushed by this indifference. The scene remains static; the space silently articulates what words can no longer express.

Through the use of sparse expressive means, minimalist acting, and powerful spatial-visual imagery, the director creates a profoundly tragic, yet simultaneously cold and detached conclusion to the production. This approach corresponds to a contemporary attitude toward human loss, wherein even the most horrific events occur in proximity, yet remain outside the focus of most people's attention. Betekhtin does not provide an answer to the question of whether there is a limit to human indifference – he leaves the viewer alone with this thought, immersing them in a space of

discomforting silence. There is no emotional outburst in this finale, no catharsis, no closure – instead, the director offers a frozen frame, in which tragedy and indifference merge into a single theatrical image. It is precisely this delay, this pause, this incompleteness of the ending that forces the spectator not merely to witness but to reflect – what is more terrifying: Treplev's suicide, or the pervasive indifference into which it dissolves?

Nikita Betekhtin's production becomes a theatrical study of human loneliness, in which Chekhov's text is expanded through symbolic, musical, and intertextual layers. Here, loneliness is not simply a theme of the play, but a structural principle of the production, determining its visual, rhythmic, and semantic organization. In this stage statement, Chekhovian melancholy – of separation, loss, and unspoken words – acquires a new resonance: the director compels the audience not merely to observe the fragmented fates of the characters but to live through their inner tragedy, to feel the vibration of their pain, emptiness, and helplessness.

The use of intertextuality and musical-dramaturgical insertions in constructing the production's artistic image, the work with expressive tempo-rhythm and symbolic *mise-en-scènes*, as well as the creation of a sound score, all contribute to forming a new theatrical dimension in which the audience becomes not only a witness but a co-participant in a dialogue on the nature of human solitude. Thus, this production becomes a significant milestone in the exploration of classical dramaturgy on the stage of the "Eugène Ionesco" Theatre, offering the audience a new interpretation of Chekhov's material. The director rejects traditional psychological theatre in favor of an associative-imagistic stage statement, emphasizing spatial metaphors, stage action as artistic gesture, and an experimental visual-sonic score.

This production serves as an example of contemporary stage expression embedded in the postdramatic paradigm, wherein the dramatic text loses its dominant role and becomes the foundation for visual, physical, and conceptual exploration. In this sense, the production may be regarded not only as an artistic work but also as a theatrical inquiry capable of expanding the perception of classical dramaturgy and proposing new avenues for its interpretation in the context of the twenty-first century. Nikita Betekhtin's *Seagull* becomes not simply a new interpretation of Chek-

hov's play but an independent theatrical manifesto in which, through visual language, metaphors, and theatrical signs, an analysis of art as a system is articulated – its crisis, the struggle for renewal, and the inevitability of historical repetition.

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