

Creating a wider access to museum archives: presentation of the web page dedicated to Lithuanian scenographer Liudas Truikys

by Živilė Ambrasaitė

Before acquainting you with the newly created web site I would like to say couple of words about its authors and institution they represent, namely about the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum. Afterwards I will briefly present the web page itself.

There are few fragments of a history of the Museum. The Theatre Museum was founded by Lithuanian writers Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius and Balys Sruoga in 1926. Until 1936 it was situated in Vytautas the Great University in Kaunas. Later it was transferred to the State Theatre. Since 1957 the Theatre Museum belonged to the Lithuanian Theatrical Society. In 1964 a department named the Theatre and Music Museum functioned under the auspices of the Lithuanian Art Museum. In 1992 the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum became a self-dependent institution. The Museum is both a depository of exhibits, a point where scientific researches are carried out, anniversary celebrations, concerts, lectures, meetings with famous people and educational events are taking place.

The Museum archives are bulging with a various material that reflects key moments in Lithuanian theatre, music and cinema history. Objects of very different kind are stored there: documents, photographs, audio-video material, posters, scenography' sketches, costumes, musical instruments, puppets, personal memorabilia of famous Lithuanian actors, directors, singers, etc. The exhibits are gathered from the numerous collections of theatres and cinemas, art societies, art companies, unions of artists, art schools and other cultural institutions and private collections. At the common day there are stored over 280.000 artifacts. Only small part of it is exhibited in the constant exposition named 'From the Collections of the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum. 19th – first half of 20th century'. So the biggest part of the Museum collection remains hidden from masses view.

The Museum' workers seek to simplify an access to most requested items. It's important not only to visitors' comfort, but due to exhibits' welfare too – items frequently taken out from repositories and showed to the visitors are at risk of damage. To escape mentioned subsequences and for ease of application there was decided gradually start recording images of exhibits' and information related to them and save it all in database. But in the mean time it remains just a beautiful vision of the future – there is a lot of preliminary work left to be done.

Not only items interesting to the Lithuanian audience are stored in the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum. For example in depository of the Art Department are stored staged design and costumes' sketches created by the internationally known artists such as Mstislav Dobuzhinskii, Alexander Benois, Natalija Goncharova, Ludolfs Liberts and other, who once worked in Lithuanian theatre. Sure there are a lot of Lithuanian scenographers who are not well known abroad, but are worthy of note. One of them is Liudas Truikys – a remarkable artist and personality in Lithuanian culture. Truikys is one of the best-known Lithuanian theatre reformers who cardinally changed the point of view to the scenography, its problems and aims. He had an ability to visualize music and make the visual image sound; he was gifted with capability to turn a musical sound into a plastic form. His talent fully revealed on the Lithuanian Opera stage.

Idea to create a web site dedicated to Truikys came when in 2004 was celebrated 100 years since artists' birth. During the festive events the collection of artist's works held in the Museum invited exclusive appreciation. There are more than 300 units of Truikys's works in the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum. They are some of the most valuable scenography sketches in the Museum collection, that increasingly inviting attention to artist oeuvre.

Virtual exhibition of Truikys' works not only introduces one of the most famous Lithuanian artists, but also gives a chance to have a closer look to the development of his individual style. This exhibition contains only a part of the artist's creative inheritance, which is collected in the museum. Presented works are the best description to Truikys' artistic capability. The arrangement of this site is straight enough: the names of the plays are chronologically laid out in the running line; aside the scenery and costume sketches the photos of the scenes of the performance are shown in the separate pages to every play. Visual information is replenished with Truikys' thoughts about the artists' problems that he had faced while creating scenography of the various plays. Also you can find information about the artist, most important dates of his life, his own credo, which is illustrated by Truikys' personal photos, in the site.

Truikys' web site is the first project of the Museum's Art Department in the web. And the first one of the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum's web pages entirely dedicated to one artist – despite the Museum has the web site you can't find any particular information about personalities in it. When making Truikys' web page we faced some problems – mostly financial. So the result is far enough from its original conception. Because of the limited resources we had to refuse some of the ideas particularly associated with previously conceived sound and visual effects. The Museum workers are hoping to improve any occasion to develop Truikys' web site and bring it closer to its conception as much as it could be.

Authors of the Truikys' web site hope that the works shown there will be interesting not only to Lithuanian art lovers but also it will give a possibility to know more about Truikys oeuvre to people abroad also it will allow to appreciate the artists work in the broader art context. Also we hope to continue the work we have started and create more web pages committed to collections of the Museum in the future.

Address of Liudas Truikys' web site:
www.ltmkm.lt/truikys/