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OEDIPUS TYRANNUS – ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΥΣ

di Francesco Chiaro

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King For A Day

*In the context of the 1st Meeting of Young Artists of Southeast Europe Ancient Drama and Politics, Tracing Limits and Possibilities, director Giorgos Kolovos gives a contemporary spin to Sophocles' **Oedipus Tyrannus**, building a bridge between Thebes' governance and today's heads of state, asking out loud: «Does the contemporary political situation permit such leaders?». The answer seems to get lost in translation.*

+ Abstract: Italiano

+ Abstract: Greek

Greece, the birthplace of democracy, has come very far from the glories of its past, and even though many face this decadence with reluctance, there are some, often in cultural environments, that are willing to ask the hard questions and face the even harder answers. It is the case with Kolovos' take on Sophocles' **Oedipus Tyrannus**, the world-renowned tragedy about a Tyrant who becomes a King and accepts his duties right to the end. The story doesn't change: Oedipus, the alleged son of Corinthian King Polybus, saves Thebes from the deadly woes inflicted upon it by the Sphinx and becomes its ruler. Respected by his people, he becomes a good and wise *tyrannos*, right until the city is struck by yet another scourge: the plague.

As by the Gods will, the throne shall not govern on a healthy reign until the murder of previous King Laius is not set right and the ritual uncleanness of the capital comes to a stop. Being the «perfect» leader that he is, Oedipus will embark in an unrestrained quest to solve this heinous crime, only to come to the realization that he himself had been the driving force of his own miseries, both as killer of his true father, Laius, and husband of his own mother, Queen Jocasta. The truth will ultimately lead the newly appointed King to the only “just” solution: his own demise.

What changes, then, is that the ordeal takes place in modern times, where politics, evidently, is not a matter of serving the people, but a job like any other. As the director himself wonders, «who are the wise elder of the Chorus today? Are they truly wise or are they simply elected as such? As tragedy emerges, do they choose to stand together or each one decides to take a separate way?». Moving among stunningly simple yet evocative set designs, the collar and tie entourage lays out the tragic investigation with a satisfying crescendo of convincing performances from all actors, who try with all their might to pull the text out of its classical mist and bring it to the clearer and accessible light of our days.

Unfortunately, though, the brilliant music, the nifty “message to the nation” and the contemporary paraphernalia that surrounds the stage like safety handles to which the audience can hold on to during this ride through time and societies are not enough to convey the political message devised by Kolovos. As a matter of fact, without the director's note pointing out the aim of the play, this **Oedipus Tyrannus** would just be a highbrow display of smart and catchy gimmicks that hide a summary (or time-limited, given the «two-month preparation» that preceded this première) rielaboration of Sophocles' endeavour, which is mostly rendered unaltered.

A shame, given the enormous potential of both interpreters and technical staff behind the curtains, but also an exiting starting point from which all must work on, finding a way to strengthen its parallelism with our very own petty politicians, going beyond the mere visual medium and actually turning the original upside down, for in order to modernize a myth, we must first destroy it. Here's the limit. And here's the possibility.

The show was played at

Theatre of the Society for Macedonian Studies (ΕΜΣ) – National Theatre of Northern Greece

Ethnikis Amynis str. 2 – Thessaloniki

Sunday 24 September 2017

21.15

The 1st Meeting of Young Artists of Southeast Europe “Ancient Drama and Politics” presents

Oedipus Tyrannus

by Sophocles

translation Minos Volanakis

direction Giorgos Kolovos

dramaturgy Consultant Charis Papadopoulos

sets-costumes supervision Olga Chatziiakovou

music composition Christos Sikiotis

choreography Athina Sikioti

make-up Instructor Paressa Ioannidou

video Ada Liakou

assistant director Yannis Karamfilis

2nd assistant director Athina Sikioti

production co-ordinator Athina Samartzidou

cast Charis Papadopoulos, Mara Tsikara, Orestis Paliadelis, Timos Papadopoulos, Lila Vlachopoulou, Fani Apostolidou, Yannis Karamfilis,

Katerina Alexi, Aggelos Nerantzis, Eleftheria Aggelitsa, Marianna Pouregka