

## LITHUANIAN THEATRES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN EAGERNESS TO CREATE AND TO WATCH

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**Abstract.** The unprecedented circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed the usual processes of work throughout the creative industries. In case of theatre, the companies could no longer perform in the usual facilities and rehearsals were restricted. Theatre artists reacted differently to the new conditions dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Facing restrictions of working in contact mode some sought ways to adapt and not only create but also present performances to audiences online, others chose to deny the forms of mediatized theatre, as if waiting for the times to change. The aim of this article is to review the dynamics of theatre attendance in Lithuania in the 2018–2020 period. Data from yearly reports of state funded theatres reveal how many viewers visited Lithuanian theatres physically and how many performances were watched online. The analysis of this data provides an insight into the changes in the number of viewers compared to the pre-COVID-19-pandemic years and answers the question of whether performances on Internet platforms attracted a significant number of online audiences. The results of the analysis are indicative of the sustainability of the demand for views of performances online.

**Keywords:** creating theatre during COVID-19 pandemic, digital theatre, mediatized theatre, state theatres in Lithuania, theatre on Internet, theatre on social media.

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic affected people working in the creative industries around the world. With the global introduction of confinement and the closure of theatres, many members of the theatre community found themselves in a precarious situation. Workers in the theatre sector in particular became vulnerable due to the loss of their occupation as theatres became unable to host and produce performances as usual (Aziz Hussin & Bianus, 2022). Studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the creative industries have been carried out since the introduction of confinement and the closure of cultural institutions, and estimates are still being supplemented with new data. However, from the very beginning

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of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear that losses would reach into the billions and that hundreds of thousands of theatre workers would lose their jobs (Pulignano et al., 2021). The real losses are being calculated after the COVID-19 pandemic receded.

It was very fortunate that various financial solutions have been put forward in the European Union countries and the losses of workers in the cultural sector are being partially offset. This financial support has undoubtedly had a positive effect on the adaptability of theatres, resulting in various forms of mediatized theatre. Moreover, the pandemic experiments with the digital were in some instances framed as a gateway to a post-COVID-19 pandemic, post-capitalist, post-growth and more ethical theatre of the future (Burzyńska, 2023, p. 82), which might develop in accord with changing visual culture as well as new habits of the audience (Rădulescu, 2018, p. 264).

The aim of this article is to present empirical analysis of the situation of Lithuanian state theatres in 2020. In Lithuania, state theatres are an integral element of the theatre industry, and by definition is more financially protected compared to independent theatres. There are eight state drama and puppet theatres and two national drama theatres in Lithuania. Musical theatres are not included in research at this point. Theatres that operate in private or nongovernmental sector are not included as well. Admittedly, private and nongovernmental companies are an important research topic yet due to specific nature of their operations they require a customized data gathering as well as different research questions and strategy. For instance, individuals employed in state theatres are financially more secure than freelancers and are ensured all social benefits. They also did not lose their jobs or wages when confinement was introduced although they could not perform in theatre venues.

But has such security actually encouraged state theatres to “go on vacation” and do nothing? During the first confinement imposed in mid-March, 2020, there were deliberations about what to do, how (and if at all) to work remotely as if working remotely in theatre business was impossible. But are theatre artists truly unable to create remotely, without inviting audiences to theatre venues?

Such existential issues in creative industries during the COVID-19 pandemic are already well documented from various perspectives. After a subsequent series of isolation measures in 2020 and 2021, the most vulnerable aspects of the creative sector appeared to be their organizational and financial frameworks. This was (and to certain extent still is) particularly true in case of venue and site-based activities, such as theatres, live music, festivals, cinemas, and museums, which experienced significant losses (Naylor et al., 2021, p. 4). Consequently, the precarious circumstances of artists working in these fields became more evident in comparison with, for example, those working in design or creative services, *i.e.*, in sectors that were more adaptable to physical distancing, remote working, and restricted interaction with audiences (Naylor et al., 2021, p. 15).

Embracing digital opportunities became one of the obvious yet evidently problematic solutions for the performing arts sector (Iacobuțe, 2020, p. 134; Pietrzak-Franger et al., 2023, p. 2; Bay-Cheng, 2023, p. 9). Below, I will discuss reactions and theoretical approaches to digitalization in the theatre, ranging from a total negation to advocacy for mediatization as future-proofing (Cornici, 2021, p. 157). I will limit myself to several emblematic statements.

“Ceci n’est pas un théâtre”, stated Mark Brown, a theatre critic for the Scottish press, referencing the famous painting and writing about digital theatre in the autumn of 2020 for the influential International Association of Theatre Critics journal *Critical Stages*. Brown (2020) believes “online theatre’ to be, in most cases, essentially a ‘shadow product’” essentially due to the nature of the theatre, which is imbedded in “the unrepeatability of the performance”. More than ten years earlier, Erika Fischer-Lichte termed the same notion an “autopoietic feedback loop”. The cornerstone of her theory is the idea of an aesthetic experience where “whatever the actors do elicits response from the spectators, which impacts the performance” in a shared time and space (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 38). Hence, the performance is spontaneous and self-referential, ever-changing and unrepeatable. Consequently, in Fischer-Lichte’s opinion, “something like digital theatre does not exist”, as she stated in an interview with Ivan Medenica in autumn, 2020. Digital formats for the German scholars remain important in terms of the accessibility of productions, yet they cannot be regarded as theatre since “without spectators there is no theatre” (Medenica, 2020).

Rustom Bharucha’s approach to digital theatre is similar in many ways, however, the scholar does take virtual performances into consideration. In his video lecture “Theatre and the Coronavirus – A Speech-Act in Nine Episodes”, Bharucha (2021) first and foremost is very clear – theatre online is a form of convenience, when other ways of live interaction are not possible. However, the scholar admits the existence of certain types of productions that create a special kind of temporality and thus are able to link virtual audiences with a virtual stage. His two examples are a production by the British company *Forced Entertainment* (2020) tellingly called *End Meeting for All* and a series of short audio performances entitled *Lockdown Stories* (2020) by Indian artist Maya Krishna Rao. In both pieces, Bharucha detects a “new figuration of time”, *i.e.*, an effect where, despite physical and temporal distance, the performance manages to enmesh two realities – that of the theatre and that of the audiences. In the scholar’s opinion, these productions testify ability of theatre to forge its new forms by embracing limitations of the Corona times.

In her famous book *Virtual Theatre: An Introduction*, Giannachi (2004) emphasized the opposite. For her, the virtual theatre experience does create a “real” effect on the viewer despite itself being not “real”. The viewer (or the user, to use Giannachi’s (2004, p. 8) choice of words) is inside the work of art, is operating it, and is capable of modifying it in real time, and becomes modified in return. Thus, the virtual theatre experience becomes liberating. The virtual consumption and staging of theatrical pieces not only liberates the viewer from the canon and the dramaturgy of theatre, but also provides the possibility to perform this liberation. It might be argued that such a change in status and role of the audience might at least partially explain the popularity of theatre online in 2020 and 2021.

The theoretical discussion presented above with its clear cleavage on the *raison d’être* of digital theatre is deeply reflected in the COVID-19 pandemic reality of global theatre. The outlook presented by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2021 reveals an intensification of the consumption and production of digital cultural content. This unprecedented growth of availability of culture online is regarded as one of the most widespread ways of adaptations in the cultural and creative industries. Digitalization, however, has been easier in some sub-sectors than in others, notably in the theatre

(Naylor et al., 2021, p. 34). Admittedly, theatre turn to the digital solutions globally and this turn might prove to be permanent at least to some extent (Otto, 2023, p. 24). Yet in contrast to gaming, recorded music, and television, theatre has a shorter history and less experience with mediatization (Nellhaus, 2017, p. 346). It is also important that the mediatization of theatre is not a proven business model since in many cases theatres broadcasted their products free of charge in the name of social solidarity in a time of enforced isolation. According to UNESCO, it is therefore difficult to tell whether the COVID-19 pandemic innovations will prove to be viable and sustainable (Naylor et al., 2021, p. 34). The research presented on the following pages is intended to make a case for encouraging further and deeper exploration of the possibilities of digital theatre.

There were no performances or other mass events in Lithuania from mid-March to June, 2020. In the summer, the ban was lifted and the number of viewers allowed to attend performances was gradually increased, starting from 150 people indoors (less than 50% of venue capacity) and up to 700 at open-air events. Subsequently, theatres were allowed to welcome 200, 400, 500, and 600 viewers, and finally – for a brief time in September, 2020 – all limits were lifted as long as social distancing was respected. Very soon, however, limits were re-introduced in October: The number of audience members had to be reduced to 300, then to 150, *i.e.*, no more than 30% of venue capacity. This limited was enforced until 27 November, 2020, after which theatres were required to close entirely until April, 2021.

Individual theatres reacted differently to the first and subsequent waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. In spring, 2020, some theatres offered views of recorded archival performances to the public free of charge immediately after the introduction of confinement in the country, while others invited viewers to remotely hosted lessons in dance or classic literature (very useful for secondary school students studying at home), and still others engaged in very limited activities. It is important to mention that it was not the large national theatres or Vilnius-based theatres that were the first to respond to the first confinement in Lithuania, but smaller theatres, such as the Šiauliai State Drama Theatre, Lithuania, which invited everyone to watch their prerecorded productions online for free. Such initiatives gradually multiplied, the most popular being the dissemination of prerecorded archival performances via virtual platforms. Discussing the variety of forms of “pandemic productions” created in state-supported institutional theatres in Belgrade, Serbia, Dragičević Šešić and Stefanović (2020, pp. 83–85) distinguished three types:

- video recordings of plays distributed on social media in scheduled time;
- performances for smaller audiences;
- online discussions and “in house” video productions.

All three forms were used in Lithuania as well, but with some variation and differentiation.

## 1. Pre-recorded productions

Arguably, the most popular form of maintaining a connection with audiences in Lithuania was publicizing prerecorded performances via theatre websites. These were mostly archival productions and were made available around the clock. The theatres preferred such format to limited release repertoire of prerecorded productions as was a case, for example, in Metropolitan Opera in New York City, United States or Schaubühne theatre in Berlin, Germany.

A notable example in this case is National Kaunas Drama Theatre (NKDT), Lithuania which hosted a collection of freely available recordings of its productions long before the COVID-19 pandemic. The collection called *Teatras online* is accessible on the theatre website and although its content seems selected rather randomly (the productions are selected from Soviet times as well as the recent ones) it offers an opportunity to experience a prerecorded production online free of charge. It is important to stress that the collection was an idea coming from students of Vilnius University, Kaunas Faculty, Lithuania, who were consulted on the matter of the strategies for the audience development (Staniškytė, 2015, p. 187).

## 2. Live broadcasts

In terms of greater interaction with the remote audience, a few more immersive events appeared in the second part of 2020. For example, the Lithuanian National Drama Theatre (LNDR), Lithuania hosted opening nights of new productions both live (during a temporary lifting of restrictions) and online, providing audiences a “live-mediatized” experience. Unlike most prerecorded productions, attendance at virtual opening nights was not free of charge. The next level of interaction was provided by artists who were willing to experiment with virtual communication platforms, such as *Zoom Video Communications* or social media, e.g., *Facebook*. In the case of the former, audiences were able to experience virtual togetherness; in the latter case, the experience involved the possibility of active participation and modification of the course of the play. The *Zoom teatras* by Oskaras Koršunovas Theatre, Lithuania should be mentioned as a notable example. *Zoom teatras* launched as a live broadcasted “reading” of *Kant* (in Lithuanian: *Kantas*, 2013), a play by Marius Ivaškevičius directed by Oskaras Koršunovas. Audience was invited to join the *Zoom Video Communications* platform on scheduled time in order to experience live performance of actors presenting their parts by reading from their homes. Thus was an attempt to reach the conventional *raison d'être* of the theatre: direct, real-time, communication between the theatre and its remote audience (Papagiannouli, 2016, p. 3). The event was conceived as a one-time intervention and experiment. “It’s not theatre in the literal sense of the word, it’s something else”, stated Koršunovas. For the director performance on the *Zoom Video Communications* platform “is something completely new”, which might remind the production for television, yet in fact is “a new form of theatrical expression and ways to establish a connection with the audience”, which might prove viable in the post-COVID-19 pandemic times (Oskaro Koršunovo teatras: Vilniaus miesto teatras, 2022d). In fact, both Koršunovas and Ivaškevičius already had common international experience in creating performances on the *Zoom Video Communications* platform. For instance, in September, 2020 Evgeniya Shermeneva, a theatre producer based in Latvia, organized virtual staging of *Sleepers* (in Lithuania: *Miegantys*, 2021) a play by Ivaškevičius, directed by Koršunovas on *Zoom Video Communications* (Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, 2022c). The actors and activists from different countries (Liya Akhedzhakova, Guna Zariņa, Ksenija Rapoport, Grigorii Gladii, Anna Bogomolova, Anna Chipovskaya, the well-known journalist, writer, and Joseph Brodsky’s former friend Maria Phillimore-Slonim, the satirist and prominent Russian dissident Viktor Shenderovich, and Mikalai Khalezin, the leader of independent Belarusian theatre living in emigration, the director Kirill Serebrennikov) were

involved into the project (Šabasevičienė, 2021). The production was not intended for Lithuanian audience, however, *The Sleepers* were introduced into the repertoire of the LNDT as a regular (albeit controversial) production in 2021.

Inspired by the success of *Kant* three others were organized using the similar format: *Fainting* (in Lithuanian: *Alpulyš*, 2020) by Ivaškevičius, directed by Koršunovas (Oskaro Koršunovo teatras: Vilniaus miesto teatras, 2022c), *Yusuf* (in Lithuanian: *Jusufas*, 2020) by Kasparas Pocius, directed by Augtumas Danielius Harner (Oskaro Koršunovo teatras: Vilniaus miesto teatras, 2022b), and *Iran Conference* (2017) by Ivan Vyrypaev, directed by Artiom Rybakov (Oskaro Koršunovo teatras: Vilniaus miesto teatras, 2022a). All of the production were co-financed by Lithuanian Council for Culture, Lithuania.

### 3. Performance on social media

To the lesser extent Lithuanian theatre artists experimented with the mainstream social media as a platform for performance. One example which is worth of mentioning was created at NKDT. The performance called *Flickering* (in Lithuanian: *Mirgėjimas*, 2021) was written by Paulina Okunytė, directed by Augustas Gornatkevičius. It took place on the *Facebook* for four days 2–5 March, 2021 and was entirely dependent on the interaction with the audience which was asked to join as members of the closed group event. The production was conceived as a virtual game between the audience and the actors and was structured around a network of messages, messages, links, and discussions on the proposed topic. The network was developing in the real time and the audience was able to choose how much they want to get involved in the action – whether to be active, *i.e.*, comment, participate in discussions, contribute information, direct the plot in the desired direction, or remain only observers. The general theme of the production was understanding the unsafe modern world (Garnytė-Jadkauskienė, 2022).

Obviously, the Lithuanian theatre industry generally hoped for restrictions to end, but with the COVID-19 pandemic firmly taking hold, most theatres found ways to organize their work, continue rehearsals, create new projects, and share them with viewers remotely. On the following pages, research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Lithuanian state theatre activities in terms of audience attendance will be presented through a comparison of figures from annual reports released by theatres for the last three years.

To ascertain changes in theatre activities and the number of viewers, data from ten theatres were analyzed: LNDT, NKDT, Juozas Miltinis Drama Theatre (Lithuania), Kaunas State Puppet Theatre (Lithuania), Klaipėda Drama Theatre (KDT, Lithuania), Russian Drama Theatre of Lithuania, now – The Old Theatre of Vilnius (Lithuania), Lithuanian State Youth Theatre (LSYT, Lithuania), Šiauliai State Drama Theatre (Lithuania), State Small Theatre of Vilnius (SSTV, Lithuania), and Vilnius Puppet Theatre (Lithuania). The data set was sourced from activity reports compiled by these institutions in 2018, 2019, and 2020. Regulations require each public theatre to submit such reports to the Ministry of Culture (Lithuania) every year. The data also must be made publicly available on theatre websites.

The reports provide very diverse data about the main activities of every state theatre, including the number of staged performances and number of viewers, as well as data on

educational activities, touring, inter-sectoral cooperation, marketing, volunteering, social cooperation, human resources, and finances. For the purpose of this article, data on audience numbers were the most important. In the standardized report form, theatres are expected to report the number of “live” as well as “virtual” visits.

After an initial review of the data, a massive surge in virtual visits to theatres in 2020 was evident. It was as if theatres had suddenly acquired an immense virtual auditorium that was considerable larger than the usual visits to theatres in 2019 and 2018. Subsequent research, however, revealed that, in terms of reporting audience numbers, the COVID-19 pandemic created certain confusion and deviations.

In order to clarify the data, six interviews with representatives of state theatres were conducted. The interviewees represented top managerial positions (theatre directors, their deputies, artistic directors, marketing managers, and a head of the literary department). The interviewees revealed that the theatres did not have guidelines for presenting data which would adequately reflect the situation in 2020. This was particularly true in the case of virtual visitors, which the theatres were expected to report. Indeed, when reporting virtual visitors, some theatres conflated virtual views of productions with simple virtual visits to their websites, social network accounts, virtual attendance to educational activities, etc. After conducting the interviews, it became possible to separate the data and obtain the actual number of views for online performances.

A comparison of data from 2018, 2019, and 2020 (Figure 1) reveals an overall change in theatre attendance over the course of three years. The number of “regular”, *i.e.*, “live” visits, increased in 2019, but the COVID-19 pandemic halted that growth. The confinements inevitably affected visits to theatres and the sanitary and safety restrictions led to a significant reduction in the number of audience members physically visiting a theatre. 175 000 viewers were physically present and watched performances at Lithuanian state theatres in 2020, *i.e.*, 307 000 less than in 2019. This decrease was, however, buffered by the numbers of theatre viewers who watched productions online.

Total Number of Viewers at State Theatres 2018–2020

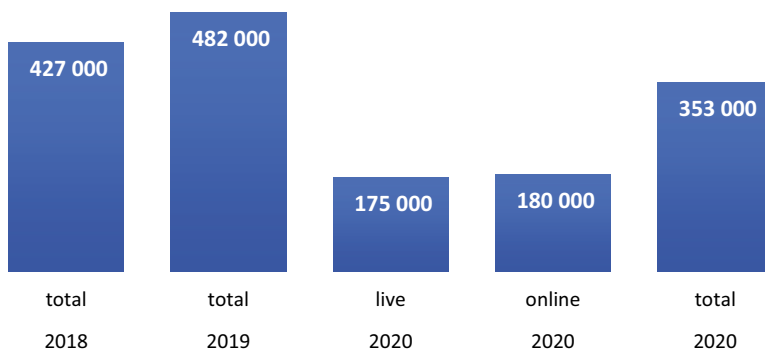
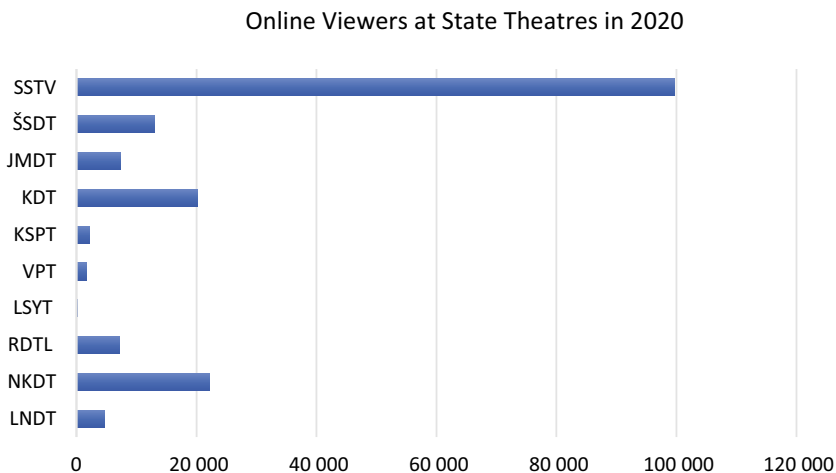


Figure 1. Total number of viewers at state theatres, 2018–2020 (source: created by author)

In one way or another, all the state theatres have adapted to the conditions dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic by developing theatre experiences online. The involvement in the virtual ways of viewing was very different, as some theatres attracted nearly 100 000 views while others only about 200 views per year. The theatre that adapted the least, in this respect, was the LSYT in Vilnius, Lithuania. In contrast the SSTV showed the greatest flexibility and ability to adapt, generating the biggest number of views. In total in 2020, state theatres gained almost 180 000 virtual audience members, which should be regarded as a considerable compensation for the loss of over 300 000 viewers at live events. It is important to note that the data registers views based on the action of a single user. Viewing from home, however, potentially means that the production was seen by an entire household. The total number of viewers who watched performances online can never be exact, as we cannot know precisely how many people watched a performance at home. Thus, the actual audience number may be even larger. It might be too bold to double that number, but it is clear that several members of a family often watch a performance at home together.

The same could be said about watching performances on social media. The data recorded the number of devices connected at a given time. Even if the performance is broadcast via pay-per-view platforms, it is still an approximate number, as there are no data available about those who watched the performance together. As a result, it is impossible to know the exact number of people who have actually watched a performance, and additional research is needed to obtain more accurate information. In any case, however, the numbers indicate that the virtual audience of the state-supported theatres in Lithuania in 2020 was a considerable compensation for lost live performance audiences. Moreover, the data supports mediatization as an important opportunity for audience development.



Note: SSTV – State Small Theatre of Vilnius, ŠSDT – Šiauliai State Drama Theatre, JMDT – Juozas Miltinis Drama Theatre, KDT – Klaipėda Drama Theatre, KSPT – Kaunas State Puppet Theatre, VPT – Vilnius Puppet Theatre, LSYT – Lithuanian State Youth Theatre, RDTL – Russian Drama Theatre of Lithuania, NKDT – National Kaunas Drama Theatre, LNDT – Lithuanian National Drama Theatre.

Figure 2. Online viewers at state theatres in 2020 (source: created by author)



Figure 2 shows that in 2020 the SSTV attracted the largest number of online viewers. In contrast, the smallest number of views was recorded at the LSYT in Vilnius. On average, Lithuanian state theatres were visited by less than 2000 online viewers per year.

The differences in these numbers are due to a variety of reasons. For instance, the LNDDT was undergoing major renovations from mid-2018 and reopened to visitors only in 2021. At that time, the LNDDT was staging performances at different venues not only in Vilnius, but also in smaller cities in Lithuania. Restrictions in terms of premises and facilities may be the reason behind such a diminished presence online. In 2020, the LNDDT broadcast its opening nights live online (e.g., *Alice*, in Lithuanian: *Alisa*, 2020 by Laurynas Adomaitis, directed by Antanas Obcarskas (Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, 2022b), *The Great Highway* (in Lithuanian: *Didysis kelias*, 2020 by August Strindberg (1993), directed by Jonas Vaitkus) (Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, 2022a), and others). However, archival recordings were not made available online unlike at another national institution, the NKDDT, which was sharing some of its archival recordings online already before the COVID-19 pandemic emerged.

In terms of audience development and accessibility, the price of tickets for online performances is another important aspect. In Lithuania, most of the virtual theatre initiatives during the first confinement were free of charge and freely available to anyone interested. However, with a new season in the fall, 2020, some theatres tried to capitalize online views and introduced the option to attend “live” season premieres online, selling tickets to events. Prior to November most of the state theatres had chosen this “hybrid” way of presenting productions to both physical and virtual audiences. This compromise seemed to be acceptable to theatres as it allowed them to preserve the simultaneity of performing and viewing in the same space, a feature especially valued by actors. On the other hand, some directors took the opportunity to enhance visually the production for online views by orchestrating camera work, framing, and other visual effects. Whether free or sold for a fee, ticket prices for online performances were relatively affordable for most as prices ranged from around four to six euro. This socially inclusive pricing has undoubtedly contributed to an increase in the popularity of performances and allowed viewers enjoy the theatre and watch the latest premieres regardless of location or financial or health status.

In terms of geographical accessibility, an interesting case occurred at the SSTV. Data show that the theatre attracted nearly 30 000 virtual viewers from around world, who watched its productions online. The SSTV also reached a record number of online viewers from Russia, who watched its famous production of Samuel Beckett’s (1982) play *Waiting for Godot* (in Lithuanian: *Belaukiant Godo*, 2006, directed by Rimas Tuminas (Valstybinis Vilniaus mažasis teatras, 2018) on 70 000 devices. The broadcast took place in the framework of the Baltic House Festival Theatre 2020 program. The festival is held in Saint Petersburg, Russia, where the director of this performance, Lithuanian-born Tuminas, is very well known and appreciated. There were other instances where the name of a famous director proved to be an important motivator driving the interest of an audience. The most watched KDDT performance online was *Our Class* (in Lithuanian: *Mūsų klasė*, 2019) by Polish playwright Tadeusz Słobodzianek (2011), directed by the renowned Lithuanian director Koršunovas (Klaipėdos dramos teatras, 2019). The production was viewed on 15 000 devices.

## Conclusions and discussion

Data from Lithuanian state theatres show that, in 2020, theatres understandably did not manage to attract the same number of physical viewers as they had in 2018 or 2019, but the number of online views of performances allowed theatres to mitigate the difference with previous years. In the course of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the Lithuanian theatre makers and companies have explored and adapted various strategies and forms of mediatized theatre. The publicizing of pre-recorded productions via theater websites appeared to be the most popular form of maintaining a connection with audiences in Lithuania. This was arguably due to low cost and effort of implementation as well as to the availability of recorded performances. The live broadcasts of performances were more actively implemented since the second part of 2020 after the partial re-opening of theatre venues became possible. Lithuanian theatre artists experimented with the mainstream social media as a platform for performance to the lesser extent. This kind of productions, however, took place and some of the most intriguing instances were created at the state theatres. Regardless, due to stable state funding, state theatres have only partially exploited the possibilities of online theatre solutions. The Lithuania theatre milieu in the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances mirrored international discussion on nature and value of mediatized theatre. In Lithuania mediatized forms of performance found its advocates as well as opponents. On the other hand, the new COVID-19 pandemic reality was an unprecedented phenomenon and it is perfectly understandable that the theatre – an experience that requires live participation – could not easily move into the virtual space. While the debate about whether online theatre is a worthwhile endeavor is still ongoing, empirical data show that mediatized productions staged by Lithuanian state theatres were viewed on nearly 180 000 devices. Mediatized theatrical content allowed audiences, confined in their homes, to experience and enjoy theatre productions differently. The data supports the sustainability of exploring mediatized forms of performance and suggests a demand for virtual theatre experiences. Therefore, it may be argued that mediatization of theatre products has considerable potential for audience development and outreach, making theatre products available for a wider audience and thus contributing to social cohesion and the diversification of a cultural product.

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