

# RELEVANCE OF THE ADVENTUROUS HERO OF MUSICALS AND ROCK OPERAS ON THEATRICAL STAGES OF LATVIA AND UKRAINE

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*Using historically-chronological, comparative and textual methods and elements of reconstruction of the plays, we analyze common and different approaches of Latvian and Ukrainian theatres to the production of works in the genres of a musical and rock opera. The given examples combine the adventurous issues and the character of the protagonist in the theatrical performances of both countries. The chronology of the study covers largely the performances produced during the years of Latvia's and Ukraine's independence.*

*Having analysed separate musically dramatic performances of various genres presented on the stages of Riga, Liepāja (Latvia), Odessa and Kyiv (Ukraine) theatres, we can see that they all address Christian symbols and have a motif of salvation of a charming, charismatic sinner through love. The main difference between the approaches of theatres of the two countries to the implementation of musicals, zong-operas, rock operas is that Latvians succeed each time, creating significant for the generation works and performances based on their own national material. Every time Valdis Lūriņš' productions, which impress with turning some moments of Latvian history into epic ones, become a major event in the musical and theatrical life of Latvia, as was "Lāčplēsis" in 1988 and "Kaupēns, My Dear!" in 1999. The most important musicals and rock operas produced by the Ukrainian theatre are associated with the development of Western European repertoire ("The Threepenny Opera", 1968, directed by Matvei Oshеровsky and "The Threepenny Love" based on Bertolt Brecht's play, 1996, directed by Edward Mitnitsky — both of them were produced by Odessa Academic Musical Comedy Theatre; "The Threepenny Opera", 1966, directed by M. Sokolov, Kyiv National Operetta Theatre) and Russian drama ("Krechinsky's Wedding (A Game)" by Alexander Kolker, 1974, directed by E. Mitnitsky, Kyiv National Operetta Theatre) and tend to be more sentimental.*

*In the Latvian performance "Liliom" of the early 1970s the adventurism of the hero was perceived as his romantic rebellion against the philistine world (similar to the illusions of the intelligentsia of the "sixties"), the hero of Ģirts Jakovļevs excited sympathy and even admiration. Instead, in the new conditions of the market economy of Latvia and Ukraine the hero of the performances of the 1990s, "The Threepenny Love" and "Kaupēns, My Dear!", remained unmourned. If in the Odessa production Macheath (Vladimir Frolov) was respected at least for intellectualism of maxims about "cruelty of life", then in the performance of the Liepāja Theatre, catharsis paradoxically struck the audience not because of the death penalty of the main character, but because the circumstances forced the Poet-Humanist (Zigfrīds Muktupāvels) in love to become a tyrant.*

Except for four decades after the end of the Second World War, the theatre of Latvia developed following the paradigm of European cultural values. Therefore, the hero of the adventurous genre was historically inherent to this stage. Even in the Soviet period, which was characterized by a class approach to the characters of the play and creation of declarative types of protagonists and antagonists, a musical (which is typical) production of "Liliom" based on Ferenc Molnár's (1878–1952) play (1971, directed by Alfrēds Jaunušans (1919–2008), composer Imants Kalniņš, b. 1941) gained sensational popularity on the stage of the Riga Academic Drama Theatre named after Andrejs Upīts. The main character of this performance was a charming adventurer and thief (actors Ģirts Jakovļevs and Uldis Dumpis). A well-known Latvian drama researcher Guna Zeltiņa described the role of this performance as "the city-wide legend"<sup>1</sup>. In A. Jaunušans' "Liliom" performance G. Zeltiņa saw "poetry and emotionality without sentimentality", "a lesson without didactics"<sup>1</sup>. The scenographic image of the play, created by the outstanding artist of the Latvian stage Gunārs Zemgals, likened the very life of Liliom to the carousel, "in which there would be a place for each of us, each of the spectators. The carousel is like belief in opportunity, a holiday and fullness of life, art, youth, and a symbol of eternal movement"<sup>2</sup>. As to Ģ. Jakovļevs, the actor playing Liliom, the drama researcher resorted to the analogy with the "soul of the carousel"<sup>3</sup>. According to the paradoxical idea of the author of the play and the director of the performance, the paradise that cleansed the soul of a naughty thief Liliom became not the otherworldly world, where he appeared to be after his violent death, but his return to the land where he met his daughter born after his death.

Due to its popularity, in 2013 the play was put on at today's National Theatre of Latvia under the direction of Edmunds Freibergs (starring Ivars Kļavinskis and

Kaspars Dumburs). Notable is the interest of the Latvian cinema and theatre in the heroine of the novel "A Smiling Leaf" by Andrejs Upīts — Emma Kārklis (a shady lady and dreamer of a beautiful life). Thus, a film based on the novel "My Wealthy Mistress", 1969 (directed by Leonīds Leimanis, with the cult actors Līga Liepiņa and Eduards Pāvuls in the lead roles) became momentous. In 2013, the production of Ināra Slucka of the same title was shown (Emma's part — Inga Misāne) on the stage of the same National Theatre.

Unlike Latvia, in Ukraine the genre of adventurous drama or tragicomedy practically did not develop under the influence of the royal, and later Soviet censorship. The only exception is perhaps an invariably popular tragicomedy "Chasing Two Hares" by Mikhail Staritsky, whose hero is a small marriage fraud Golokhvastov. Characteristically, the first attempts to raise the adventurous, scenically attractive type of the hero were made in the "light" genre. In the significant stage work of the Ukrainian theatre of musical comedy "At dawn" by Oscar Sandler *de facto* charming character, gangster Mishka Yaponchik (a premiere performer — Mikhail Vodyanoy from Odessa) was opposed to the *de jure* main, but stagnantly indistinct character of Kotovsky. It is symptomatic that the first appeal of the Odessa Musical Comedy Theatre, headed by the main director of the theatre Matvei Oshеровsky (1920–2009) to the material of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's zong-opera "The Threepenny Opera" was a kind of echo of the "thaw". In fact, in 1968, this performance was presented by the graduates of the department of Musical Comedy Theatre at the Odessa Theatre Art and Technical College — Valery Barda-Sklyarenko, Galina Zhadushkina, Volodymyr Frolov, Victoria Frolova and Valentin Valovy — as a diploma work and began a new countdown in the history of the musical comedy theatre. Principles of M. Oshеровsky's orientation towards high-quality dramatic material and

its specific performance aesthetics were later summed up by the outstanding actor of the National Musical Comedy Theatre V. Frolov: "The director made synthetic actors of us in the new genre sense. You are playing as an operetta actor, that does not work for me, — said M. Oshеровsky"<sup>4</sup>. In the late 1960s, "The Threepenny Opera" was put on at the Kiev Operetta Theatre by the actor of St. Petersburg school Nikolai Sokolov. Despite his collaboration with the leading choreographer of the genre Boris Tairov and artist Alexander Sulmar, the production failed to stand the test of time. In the early 1970s, an outstanding Ukrainian stage director Edward Mitnitsky (1931–2018) made one more attempt to develop an important direction in the repertoire of the national operetta theatre. He staged a musical "The Wedding of Krechinsky" based on the classic play by Alexander Sukhov-Kobylin (music by Aleksandr Kolker, libretto by Kim Ryzhov). However, the performance with an "ideologically extraneous" hero again failed to stay in the repertoire of the Soviet theatre.

Only in the newest times of independent Ukraine, an objectively existing in the society type of an asocial hero gained scenic reflection in the genre of drama or tragicomedy. In 1994, a Russian director Viktor Strizhov put on a musical "The Wedding of Krechinsky" at the Odessa Academic Theatre of Musical Comedy named after M. Vodyanoy. This performance can still be found on the theatre's playbills. In 1996, E. Mitnitsky staged here "The Threepenny Opera" based on the work of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. In both productions of the Odessa theatre the lead role was played by Vladimir Frolov. In the 1990s, the material of the "Threepenny Love" gained ominous relevance. Odessa production "alienated" from the canonical variant and that was literally reflected in its title — "The Threepenny Love". Poet Inna Rudea wrote new texts of zongs for E. Mitnitsky's performance. And the music by K. Weill, with the exception of the

renowned Zong of Macheath, was substituted with a selection of themes from popular musicals and retro songs. Brecht's postulate of the "epic theatre", with the inherent method of "alienation", was realized by the group of directors the least, which was stressed by reviewers<sup>5</sup>. E. Mitnitsky deliberately chose a realistically psychological style of acting, non-typical for B. Brecht's "epic theatre", making only certain journalistic accents (in order to illustrate the connection of the classical text with the realities of the present). And he did it despite the fact that two years earlier, in the Odessa theatre, the Brechtian method in the relationship between the actor and the character was essentially a cross-cutting principle of E. Mitnitsky and Michael Lich's production "Ball in Honor of the King". In the performance which was devoted to M. Vodyanoy each of the actors who played some of his characters was supposed to demonstrate the "canon" of the performance of the outstanding master of the "light genre". At the same time, each actor quite naturally added something from their own psychophysics to the "iconographic" interpretation, and — most importantly — sought to reflect the third hypostasis of the character: to try to imagine how Mikhail Vodyanoy would play this part today. In the most important moments of the play "The Threepenny Love" Brecht's "alienation" overtook the figurative "recreation" of Les Kurbas. According to the observations made by the critic Olena Koltunova, E. Mitnitsky intuitively found the figurative "equivalent" of the famous aria: emerging from the auditorium, Mack the Knife went on the edge of the orchestra pit (as if he was walking on the blade of a knife), moving on a dangerously narrow surface<sup>6</sup>. That trick along with the vocal performance helped to reveal the image of the character according to the dramatic concept of the performance.

In the performance "The Threepenny Opera" directed by Igor Vladimirov (Leninograd Theatre "Lensovet", 1981), a violent

spontaneous street crowd brought forth a similar hero — Macheath. Macheath, played by E. Mitnitsky and V. Frolov, was demonstratively shown as a hero from a different world — that is why he came into the space of the performance from the auditorium. But the visual image of E. Mitnitsky's performance entered into a dialogue with the aesthetics of Vladimir Vorobyov's production "The Broken Mirror, or The New Beggar's Opera" based on the work of A. Zhurbin (Leningrad Theatre of Musical Comedy, 1979). In that performance, the image of a gangster city was created by the artist Irina Vedernikova with the help of the cold metal sparkle of police helmets and overalls and threatening darkness. In the Odessa performance, the texture and color of clothes and scenography also played a huge role in creating the visual image of the world of "beggars" and "authorities". Black leather trousers and black jersey on supers created an image of the aggressive street, unstable in its attitude to idols. A luxury shiny white leather raincoat with a black hat on the main character looked romantically inappropriate on the background of a lapidary concrete wall aqueduct. Its rough structure prompted the image of the City. Presenting the hero in such a way, the Liliom the thief and robber artist S. Zaitsev came under criticism saying that the theatre was moving towards kitsch<sup>7</sup>, but the director needed just such kind of Mekhit the loner, literally a "black sheep".

The performance of E. Mitnitsky "The Threepenny Love" was characterized not only by the total organization of the stage space, but also by the creation of a peculiar model of the microcosm. The action took place on all venues: in the gangways and chairs of the auditorium, on the side balconies, near the orchestra pit, and even on the grate. In the famous aria of Mack the Knife, the soloist who was walking the "blade" of the orchestra pit was "accompanied" by the choir artists, who were standing on peculiar platforms along the stage, the ballet dancers who danced on the

illuminated platform deep at the back of the stage and on the forestage. "On the parapet" of the orchestra pit respectable Mrs. Peachum was awaited by prostitutes, friends of Macheath. The interactive tone of the show became apparent through the quarrels of parents Peachum and their exchange of sarcastic utterances with their daughter which were just pouring into the auditorium (in such a way the audience was "drawn" into a family scandal). Significant in this regard was the scene of Brown's exit, when the police informants directed the beams of lantern light into the eyes of the audience, literally making them fear. The semantics of interaction of parts of the theatre space was inherent to the plastique-spatial component of E. Mitnitsky's direction during the entire performance. Thus, in the scene of Macheath in prison, the director's and artist's imagination threw V. Frolov onto the board fence, from which, literally, his hero was nowhere to go. At the same time, down, "out of prison", the captain's women were sorting things out. The scene of the hero's escape was solved in the traditions of the adventurous-picaresque genre: the board fence with inspired Macheath on it went into the air, as if satirizing the all-powerful justice and the laws of gravity of the mortal solid.

Unlike the drama version of "The Threepenny Opera" by I. Vladimirov, the performances of the Leningrad and Odessa theatres of musical comedy were marked by sentimental intonation, which was emphasized by the reviewers of both productions<sup>8</sup>. In the production of E. Mitnitsky, the episode of the Macheath and Polly's parting was resolved by means of a highly generalizing language of choreography to the music of F. Ley (also a peculiar equivalent of "alienation" — only by means of the theatre of musical comedy). In the second act of the performance, the lyrical relationship line Macheath — Polly was replaced by the dramatic retrospective of the relationship with Jenny (perfectly played by

Victoria Frolova). The scene was solved in the style of brutal tango.

E. Mitnitsky “reads” the image of the bandit Macheath as the last romantic, almost Don Quixote. Free plastique citation of crucifixion — in his rock opera Webber’s transcription rather than in the canonical Gospel one — was also read in choreography of Igor Didurko (Macheath who was crucified and raised over the crowd of street hippies), as well as in many director’s subtexts. In the final, this “last gentleman in the city”, as Jenny Malina called him, was equally betrayed, sold for three pennies both by offended Jenny and embarrassed Polly, as well as by Lucy Brown, who was an episode in his life. The romantic fatalist Macheath was dying, defeated by pragmatism and the business grasp of Polly’s father (in the vividly dramatic performance of Boris Borovsky). In one way or another, either cowardice or bourgeois thrift of all people who had been close to Macheath before (read — the apostles) led to the fact that, without resistance, they contributed to his execution. A special role in the implementation of such a concept was allotted by the director to Panther Brown. In the scene of Macheath’s betrayal, Brown, presented by Viktor Aloin in the unexpected for the operetta stage delicate psychological setting, showed “bestial grin” instead of Pilate’s torments of conscience which was non-traditional for most zong-opera productions. The gradual transition of Macheath into the rank of the martyr was also prompted by the leitmotif from Puccini’s “Madame Butterfly” — an escape from the parameters of the democratic musically-dramatic genre into the sphere of high opera classics.

The Odessa performance managed to reflect the concept of fall of illusions about the humanity of the society in the mid-1990s. Therefore, it was no accident that the intonation of Macheath was tired, disappointed, and his prophecy of his own death (“life is cruel”) was not for nothing, too. The phrase

“First bread, then morality” was heard from V. Frolov as existential reflections aloud. The last monologue — inflammatory, stunningly accelerated flow of thoughts — was a testament of the “messiah” to the disciples before the head of the hero was to be cut off from the body. E. Mitnitsky came up with the scene of execution figuratively: proclaiming Macheath’s ante-mortem monologue, the actor inexorably quickly faded into the hatch until his head remained “cut off” by the line of the stage, and then disappeared from its surface at all.

Compositional coherence of the performance was reflected in the final repetition of the technique, already used at the beginning. Macheath, the eternal hero, came onto the stage with a zong, assigning it semantically broader sense, as it was the arena of life.

Almost at the same time, in 1999, Liepāja Theatre, the oldest theatre in Latvia, presented a rock opera “Kaupēns, My Dear!” featuring the Liepāja actors as well as invited pop and rock stars from Latvia. A popular composer Jānis Lūsēns and a playwright Māra Zālīte created their original work basing on the historical material. They took Ansis Kaupēns as a model for their hero, a deserter from the ranks of the Red Army in the First World War (like in the productions of Ukrainian colleagues, the analogy between the present and the global crisis of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is typical). Because of his love for money, Kaupēns became a brutal serial killer and was later convicted and executed. However, the authors of the rock opera corrected the motivation of his crimes. They were especially attracted by the chance to reveal the theme of perniciousness of a large city’s temptations for a young, ambitious farmer. It was the city, with its loud newspaper sensations, tinsel of the “Palace” casino, jewelry stores, that was opposed by the director of the show Valdis Lūriņš to the pure soul of the Poet, dressed in his greatcoat and high soldier’s boots (powerful acting of Zigfrīds Muktupāvels). For the

author of the performance dramaturgy it was important to have both a protagonist and an antagonist, similarly to their earlier joint (with V. Lūriņš) work “Lāčplēsis” in which the hero of the same name was opposed to the anti-hero Kangars. M. Zālīte emphasized: “Sudrabkalniņš (prototype of the Poet — note of Yu. Shch.) was a shooter in the same way as Kaupēns. It was my parallel with Lāčplēsis and Rainis’ Kangars. They both belonged to one circle. Why did one become good, and the other — bad?”<sup>9</sup>.

Not only antagonist Kaupēns, but also the lyrical heroine of the performance, a yesterday’s schoolgirl Valija (Inese Caune) reflected the main ethical problem of the play. She was in love with the media images on the cinema screen, silhouettes of mannequins from fashion stores, and for this reason she was not able to appreciate the true love of the Poet and changed him to a spectacular and empty shine of Kaupēns (Mārtiņš Freimanis). As M. Zālīte noted: “Valija saw him in a white raincoat and fell in love”<sup>10</sup>. That is why the duet of Poet and Valija about the “world market, where life itself is sold like coffee, soap, a horse, was infused with bitterness”.

The play by V. Lūriņš adopted the imagery of M. Zālīte’s libretto and was full of Christian symbolism. The stage in the prologue was deeply symbolic, where the beggar-Motherland mourned its sons, one of whom went to “the reds”, the other — to “the whites”, and both of them died. It was there where performers of Poet and Kaupēns met, staring at each other, as if through the darkness of time. Such a mise-en-scene set spectators for the perception of the story of the struggle of the righteous Poet and the wicked murderer for one woman as a tragedy of “brothers” of the same faiths, a kind of Cain and Abel. Already in the previous scene in the public house Kaupēns in some mysterious anger ordered the prostitute to wash his body, which had suffered a lot in the trenches of the war. The dramatic monologue of the

Poet, “I haven’t paddled through the mud”, in which he appeals mentally to his mother, who remained in the village to wait for him, rose up to the symbol of faith, evoking associations with the soldier son’s prayer to the Virgin Mary. The mysterious glow of dozens of innocently lost souls lit up the scene of Kaupēns’ emotional turmoil. The following, climatic scene emerged from this one when the Poet took the body of the murdered guy to his hands, and their image was likened to the “*Pietà*” and then there was the epic solo of Z. Muktupāvels “Time” performed with the chorus ensemble.

In a symptomatic coincidence with the same scene in “The Threepenny Love”, the first act of “Kaupēns, My Dear!” was closed by the scene of appearance of the false messiah Kaupēns, who was able to make a crowd of fashionable girls fall in love with his elegant semblance in a white raincoat, a hat and with a walking stick. The very belonging of the performer of this role, Mārtiņš Freimanis, a young pop idol of the Latvians, to the show business made this scene remarkable.

In an English-language edition relating to the history and present of the Latvian theatre Edīte Tišheizere commented on this production: “A seemingly lyrical story about the Poet’s and robber’s love towards the same girl evolved into a parable about the false values created by the hysteria of the mass media, and about the new Latvian state created in the front of the audience and disgraced at the very moment of its creation”<sup>12</sup>. The echo of this performance on the provincial stage reached a nationwide scale. In 2001, a CD appeared with tracks from “Kaupēns, My Dear!”, parts of Lūsēns, recorded by Zīgrīds Muktupāvels, Mārtiņš Freimanis, Ivars Stoinins, involved in the play, as well as by pop singers Sigita Jevglevska and Ance Krauze. As one of the most significant achievements of the theatrical and musical culture of Latvia, the performance was immortalized in the

TV version, which was broadcast on the First National Channel (2002). The production “Kaupēns, My Dear!” was a great success, winning the Grand Prix at the Latvian Annual Theatre Awards ceremony.

## Conclusion

Having analysed separate musical dramatic performances of various genres which are presented on the stages of Latvian and Ukrainian theatres, we can see that they all have much in common: the feeling of humanism crisis in the society, whose ideal is consumption; addressing powerful Christian symbols (postmodern cultural citations of the crucifixion and pieta, the characters are given functions of biblical archetypes of Jesus and the apostles, Cain and Abel, etc. not only at the level of the plot, but also in mise-en-scenes and choreography); sustainable preservation of the leading motif and the motif of salvation of a charming, charismatic sinner through love. The main difference between the approaches of theaters of the two countries to the implementation of musicals, zong-operas, rock operas is that Latvians succeed each time, creating significant for the generation works and performances based on their own national material. Musical productions and rock operas have become a kind of influential instrument of the nation's self-identification. Productions by Valdis Lūriņš, which impress with turning some moments of Latvian history into epic ones, every time become a major event in the musical and theatrical life of Latvia, as was *Lāčplēsis* in 1988 and *Kaupēns, My Dear!* in 1999 (this is evidenced by TV versions of these performances). Latvians draw on experience of Broadway inviting pop and rock stars to participate in their productions.

The most important musicals and rock-operas produced by the Ukrainian theatre are associated with the development of Western-European and Russian drama and tend to be more sentimental. They are well-known only

to a small number of people who regularly go to theaters of musical comedy. It is typical for Ukrainians to engage vocalists and symphony orchestra of the repertory theatre in musical performances. However, the highest achievements in the genres of musical and rock opera on the Ukrainian stage are connected with the invitation dramatic directors who are capable of embodying conceptually complex works. Experimental performances in the genres of rock opera and zong-opera do not have a long run at state theatres due to the complexity of their “non-operetta” specificity.

In the Latvian performance “Liliom” of the early 1970s the adventurism of the hero was perceived as his romantic rebellion against the philistine world (similar to the illusions of the intelligentsia of the “sixties”), the hero of Ģ. Jakovļevs excited sympathy and even admiration. Instead, in the new conditions of the market economy of Latvia and Ukraine the hero of the performances of the 1990s, “The Threepenny Love” and “Kaupēns, My Dear!”, remained unmourned. If in the Odessa production Macheath was respected at least for intellectualism of maxims about “cruelty of life”, then in the performance of the Liepāja Theatre, catharsis paradoxically struck the audience not because of the death penalty of the main character, but because the circumstances forced the Poet-Humanist in love to become a tyrant in order to punish his own Latin brother Kaupēns, for whom honor and morality was clouded out by the mirage of gold.

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## DĒKAINO VAROŅU SALĪDZINĀJUMS MŪZIKLOS UN ROKOPERĀS LATVIJAS UN UKRAINAS TEĀTROS

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## Kopsavilkums

**Atslēgvārdi:** mūzikls, rokopera, Ukrainas teātris, Latvijas teātris

Izmantojot vēsturiski hronoloģiskas, salīdzinošas un tekstuālās metodes un lugu rekonstrukciju elementus, analizētas kopīgās un atšķirīgās pieejas Latvijas un Ukrainas teātros mūziklu un rokoperu iestudēšanā. Sniegtie piemēri apvieno ar piedzīvojumiem saistīto tēmu



apskatus un protagonistu raksturojumus abu valstu teātru uzvedumos. Pētījuma hronoloģija lielākoties aptver uzvedumus, kas iestudēti Latvijas un Ukrainas neatkarības perioda laikā.

Izanalizējot atsevišķus dažādu žanru muzikālus uzvedumus, kas izrādīti Rīgas un Liepājas (Latvija) un Kijevas un Odesas (Ukraina) teātros, mēs redzam, ka tajos visos iesaistīti kristīgie simboli, jūtams harismātiska grēcinieka glābšanas motīvs caur mīlestību. Galvenā atšķirība abu valstu teātru pieejās mūziklu, dziesmu operu un rokoperu iestudēšanā ir tāda, ka latviešu centieni katru reizi vainagojušies panākumiem — radīti attiecīgajai paaudzei nozīmīgi darbi un uzvedumi, kas balstīti nacionālajā materiālā. Valda Lūriņa veidotie uzvedumi, kuros atsevišķi Latvijas vēstures notikumi sasnieguši episku skanējumu, katru reizi kļuvuši par īpašu notikumu Latvijas mūzikas un teātra dzīvē, tā notika ar “Lāčplēsi” (1988) un “Kaupēn, mans mīlais!” (1999).

Nozīmīgākie ukraiņu teātru uzvestie mūzikli un rokoperas ir saistītas ir Rietumeiropas iestudējumiem (“Trīsgrašu opera”, 1968, rež. Matvejs Ošerovskis, un “Trīsgrašu mīlestība”, balstīti uz Bertolta Brehta lugu, 1996, rež. Edvards Miņņickis — abi iestudējumi uzvesti Odesas Akadēmiskajā muzikālās komēdijas teātrī; “Trīsgrašu opera”, 1966, rež. M. Sokolovs, Kijevas Nacionālais operetes teātris) un krievu drāmu (Aleksandra Kolkera “Krečinska kāzas (Spēle)”, 1974, rež. E. Miņņickis, Kijevas Nacionālais operetes teātris), un tie sliecas būt sentimentālāki.

Latviešu iestudējumā “Lilioms”, kas tapa 20. gadsimta 70. gadu sākumā, galvenā varoņa dēkainība tika uztverta kā romantiska sacelšanās pret mietpilsonisko pasauli (līdzīgi sešdesmito gadu inteliģences ilūzijām), un Ģirta Jakovļeva varonis izraisīja simpātijas un pat apbrīnu. Savukārt jaunajos tirgus ekonomikas apstākļos Latvijā un Ukrainā par deviņdesmito gadu iestudējumu (“Trīsgrašu mīlestība” un “Kaupēn, mans mīlais!”) varoņiem skatītāji īpaši nesēroja. Ja Odesas uzvedumā Mekiju (Vladimirs Frolovs) cienīja vismaz viņa intelektuālās pārliecības dēļ saistībā ar “dzīves nežēlību”, tad Liepājas teātra uzvedumā paradoksālā kārtā skatītājus vairāk satrieca nevis galvenā varoņa nāvessods, bet gan tas, ka iemīlējies Dzejnieks-humānists (Zigfrīds Muktupāvels), apstākļu spiests, kļuva par tirānu.