

## Foreword

You are currently holding the eleventh issue of the scholarly journal *Ars et praxis*. Revived and striding forth into a new decade, this time the journal is thinner than it could be, yet in terms of the topics discussed and its content, it is certainly no less weighty than previous issues. This volume presents seven papers by lecturers and doctoral students in the arts from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LMTA) and a publication by a doctoral student from the Institute of Cultural Research at the University of Tartu. As per tradition, scholarly research in the journal is divided into the theoretical (*Ars*) and practical (*Praxis*) parts of the issue.

The *Ars* part begins with an article that analyses the important, hitherto not yet separately researched field in the activities of the Kaunas State Theatre, namely – foreign opera soloists' tours to the State Theatre. This article is also the second part of the research conducted by Tamara Vainauskienė “Touring of foreign opera soloists at the State Theatre: personalia and identification of vocal schools” that was published in Issue 10 of *Ars et praxis*. In this second article, based on archival documents, literature, performance reviews and other relevant sources of information, the author continues her research about which singers had toured at the State Theatre, which vocal schools they represented, what kind of roles they performed there, and how Lithuanian music critics viewed foreign soloists at the time.

The ethnomusicologists' research field is represented in this issue by Gaila Kirdienė. The author's article “Insight into the methodology of biographical research of Lithuanian folk musicians' kinships” presents the first analysis of the research methods and approaches used by ethnomusicologists examining musicians' relatives' (auto)biographies. Kirdienė notes that in the 21st century, research in this field relies increasingly on the long narratives related by the musicians themselves during deep, semi-structured interviews in which the goal is to reveal their personal attitudes, the values being passed down from generation to generation, the changes they encounter, their experiences and psychological states in various contexts during different historical and political periods.

The other two articles from the *Ars* part of the journal present research conducted by LMTA PhD students in arts. Ieva Jackeivičiūtė introduces readers to the topic of theatre performances for babies and the challenges that arise in this practice, when the stage is oftentimes broached by an audience that runs around, takes props away from the actors,

eats, cries and sleeps. In the article “The uniqueness of the creation of performances for babies and children under five”, the author, who is herself a mother of three, says that regardless of all the difficulties theatre performers have to face, the significance of these performances on a developing child is unquestionable. The other paper is “The tradition of the absurd and black humour in documentary cinema: A. Žegulytė’s *Animus animalis* and R. Barzdžiukaitė’s *Acid Forest*”. This is Akvilė Gelažiūtė’s research in which the author analyses the tradition of the absurd. The goal of the article is to review the pre-conditions for absurdist comedy in documentary cinema and to examine how the comic nature of absurdity is expressed through narrative and narration.

The *Praxis* part of the journal opens with Neringa Valuntonytė’s article “In search of the performer’s artistic identity: stage persona and personal brand”. After conducting her research, the LMTA PhD student in arts reveals that a certain paradox exists: even though performers are expected to be somehow exceptional personalities, the conscious demonstration of this state is understood as a phenomenon that may have a negative impact. The author seeks to promote a more contemporary attitude towards a performer’s individuality by rejecting romantic provisions and instead using two concepts that carry the subtext of having a conscious identity – persona and personal brand.

Monika Jašinskaitė, who has been undertaking a doctoral fellowship in Literature and Theatre Studies at the University of Tartu Institute of Cultural Research since 2021, has submitted her research to this journal in English – “The effects of neoliberalism on the Lithuanian performing arts system: production and distribution”. In her article she analyses how neoliberalism has affected the Lithuanian performing arts system. According to the author, her study revealed the influence of neoliberalism on the Lithuanian performing arts at the institutional and state levels, highlighting the large sector of independent organisations in the market that have adapted to working under neoliberal conditions, the changes in the organisation of creative processes in state theatres, underdevelopment in the distribution market, as well as issues related to public financing.

The article “Collaboration between the composer and performer: limits and potentials” was written by two authors – the LMTA PhD student in arts Joana Daunytė-Savickienė and her research paper supervisor Audra Versekėnaitė-Efthymiou. The co-authored research focuses on the creative collaboration of Lithuanian composers Žibuoklė Martinaitytė, Rūta Vitkauskaitė and Giedrė Pauliukevičiūtė with one of the article’s authors – harpist Daunytė-Savickienė. In 2018–2022, the harpist initiated a project for the composition of new works for solo harp or harp with ensemble called *Arfa naujai – LT*, as such, the article seeks to reveal the various models for collaborating between the composers and the harpist during the precomposition stage. The research

was conducted by applying the case analysis method, discussing specific instances of collaboration between the performer and the afore-mentioned three composers.

The LMTA PhD student in arts Maria Mirovskaya's research "The piano and wind sextet: issues in repertoire selection" rounds up the *Praxis* part. The author states that during the course of more than 170 years, around 300 sextets were written leading to the formation of specific trends in the piano and wind sextet genre, such as the use of large forms in the sextet composition, the importance of the role of the piano in the score, etc. She also highlights that the process of selecting a repertoire for a sextet is fundamentally ambivalent, as the relatively large number of works and the stylistic variety this affords poses a challenge to both university-level students and professional performers.

The eleventh issue of *Ars et praxis* ends with the Appendices, consisting of the 2023 Chronicle that gives an overview of the latest publishing news from the LMTA, conferences, defended doctoral projects, lists of Master's and Bachelor's papers, and awards; there is also information about the article authors appearing in this issue of *Ars et praxis* and a Guide for Authors.

The Compiler