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Title of the article - "Children are children: "My dear Mathilde" in the Theatre on Vasilievsky"

In the Chekhov Moscow Art Theatre the queen of the play for three actors is Irina Miroshnichenko, who proves everybody that love is always right. In the Theatre on Vasilievsky three main characters live on equal terms and conceptual emphasis is shifted: these are the children who are always right, even though these kids are already 50.

The American Israel Horowitz can not only skillfully transfer human comedies into dialogues - he teaches this to young people: since 1975 there is a drama laboratory he established in New York. In addition, he is the author of a couple of well-known Hollywood scripts, but America as a whole is not really crazy about him. He does not reveal the terrible social evils like Williams, but for the ever entertaining Broadway he likes to discuss psychological and moreover, sentimental ideas. His characters can shed tears over their past for too long, they can pour forth strange wisdoms before they are logically rewarded with a happy end. On the other hand, Horowitz is able to draw his characters and come up with their comprehensive, succinct definitions.

Here is, for instance, the character of "My dear Mathilde" who is performed in the Theatre on Vasilievsky by one of the best actors in the city Dmitry Vorobiev - "pathetic loser." And in general, that's it. You can add only a detail - when he finds himself in Paris, he starts a pocket dictionary, not for the words he does not know, but only for those that have negative connotation: disgusting, repulsive, despondent, etc. His external life circumstances initially produce only a comic effect: the only inheritance obtained by Matthias - this is the name of the character - from his father recently left this world - a huge apartment in Paris overlooking the Luxembourg Gardens. But, having flown over the ocean and ready to come into his rights, in the apartment he finds an 88-year-old lady and her daughter: apartment, as it turns out, was acquired by the Viager system, that is, the entry to the property is possible only after the death of its current owners, and before that - he is to pay the bills and be glad that the landlady allowed to stay here for a while, however, in exchange for his single value - gold watch.

Invited to stage the play in the Theatre on Vasilievsky director John Pepper (his photo images were exhibited a couple of years ago in CEH Manege, but neither Europe nor Petersburg know him as a theatre director), without overthinking mise en scenes - there is a chair in the middle, two armchairs and a sofa to the left and to the right - come up with a sensible in terms of human relations play about fathers and sons. Perhaps that is why "children" on the stage look younger than they are said to be: Matthias Vorobiev, despite the gray hair, looks a man in his productive prime, and Natalia Kruglova - a beautiful young woman (she is a bit over thirty). By and large, the age here is just a convention, or, more precisely, the age of the soul: maybe the characters just think that they have already lived the best half of their lives because suffering was incomparably greater than joy. But the important thing is that these characters can handle strong feelings. This is as well applied to the old lady, Mathilde, played by Elena Rakhlenko - for her everything is so to say "in the past", but memories are still vivid like dreams can be colorful at dawn. And all the turbulent emotions are connected with the only feeling - violent passion, and with the only person - Max Gold, father of Mathias, who is a dead ringer of his father.

The situation is certainly too unreal, which resembles a soap-opera, however there is enough reality in dialogues, arguments, fights and tears. And discoveries made by the three during the play, do not look artificial first of all due to qualitative acting.

Straight as a string, Mathilde, each scene appears in a new dress, and even shoes (all of it - always elegant, it emphasizes the harmony, rigor and her closed nature) tells Mathias the story of her half-century love affair, which does not make her open up, but definitely makes her twenty years younger.

On the contrary, Mathias suddenly loses that fake bravado, which entered the apartment with him, and turns into a real child, who, in response to a teacher-like comment of Mathilde - something like, "You drank too much! Go away to your room!" - firstly talks back like a schoolboy and then starts crying. These tears express such a painful and desperate powerlessness of the cruelty of life, of hypocrisy and, more importantly, of cynicism of a woman standing in front of him, so that the character, this lame duck, immediately gets a hundred points. A hundred points would also go to any child, the fact of whose existence could not cause concern, or at least interest of the father, could not keep from committing suicide unhappy mother, who bore no cheating.

Mathilde although, having learned her share of the truth, pour no tears, she falls onto a chair with a heart attack and escapes death by a miracle.

Chloe Natalia Kruglova seems to be the strongest in the beginning. Inherited from the mother her ability to walk buttoned and speak with iron voice seems her nature, not a mask. Well, she has grown so strong, looking into the eyes of her father, where she saw his eternal question - is she his daughter, serving as an umbrella to her mother - at the age of 10, and 20, and 30 - she made a courageous decision to be alone, not living in lies. She knows about lawyers, and civil rights, she is not to be scared by the American "fuck you" - she can give more than that. In the beginning Natalia Kruglova plays such an excellent pupil not capable of expressing herself (in fact, she is a teacher of French, just like her mother before retirement). Her nature is revealed in the episode, when she freaks out of drunk Mathias, who suddenly drops to his knees, clutching her waist. Her escape reveals her wild, almost animal fear of feeling, it is a consequence of the same infantilism, childish fear of real life - a syndrome of Amelie Poulain. Even if later Chloe was not sitting in a chair like a little girl cross-legged in a funny bright-red T-shirt and did not repeat, as in a dream, "Mom, don't leave us" - still Matilda could not be justified, because the reason why two innocent creatures have become losers in life lies in total selfishness of adults.

Romantic post-war Paris on the background - with its free, open, loving citizens, with its narrow embankments and endless parks, with its chansons, telling purely about passion that knows no barriers, with Hemingway, Henry Miller, jazz - it's all good in the black-and-white prints and videos that were created by Tatiana Mishina. Life with its colors, not always bright, requires responsibility - at least for the children who do not have the opportunity to choose. And even though Mathilde has a wise phrase to say to the children who found love - "It is quite ridiculous to exalt loneliness into a virtue" - it is difficult to sympathize her. Perhaps what is left is feeling sorry for her unbelievable autism, allowing her to hear out serenely the words of the unhappiest child: "If you want to kill your child, do not kill him, just hide your love and see how your child will lean over backwards to please you. "