

The Imprint of Sound in Memoryscape. Music and Sound in Estonian Memory Theatre

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Abstract

This article examines sound design in Estonian memory theatre, based on the works of playwrights Rein Saluri and Madis Kõiv and stage director Merle Karusoo from the 1970s up to the present. Drama and theatre are vehicles of collective memory and interpreters of national history, while memory is inherently connected with theatre. By definition, memory theatre can both imitate and depict common, often contradictory and repressed or erased memories of a shared past, but can also initiate processes of remembrance.

I am seeking to answer the question of whether music and sounds can be defined as a meaningful characteristic of Estonian memory theatre. On the basis of close-reading, the article explores whether and to what extent music and sounds are written into dramaturgical texts. Based on my own memories as a theatregoer, contemporary reviews and recordings, it also examines whether and how so-called textual music and sound have been realized on stage and which functions and meanings they have carried. The theoretical framework is based on theatre and memory studies as well as on specific studies of sound design in drama theatre.