



THE PROFESSION – DIRECTOR OF A DRAMATIC THEATRE. THE DIRECTORSHIP OF JACEK GŁOMB AS AN EXEMPLIFICATION OF MODEL MANAGEMENT OF A PUBLIC THEATRE

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Keywords: work pedagogy, theatre director, Polish drama theatre, theatre management

Abstract. The article is part of the issues of work pedagogy and work sociology – both disciplines have common problem areas and conceptual categories, such as, inter alia, profession. The question I ask in the essay concerns the factors determining the durability of the director’s position in Polish public theatres. The empirical material is primarily free interviews that I conducted with Director Jacek Głomb and the actors employed in his Theatre. Analysis of the special situation at the Theatre in Legnica shows a combination of exogenous and endogenous factors conducive to maintaining power in a theatre institution. The uniqueness of this „management in culture” can be a model for other leaders who decide to run a theatre.

ZAWÓD – DYREKTOR TEATRU DRAMATYCZNEGO.
DYREKCYJA JACKA GŁOMBA JAKO EGZEMPLIFIKACJA
MODELOWEGO KIEROWANIA TEATREM PUBLICZNYM

Słowa kluczowe: pedagogika pracy, dyrektor teatru, polski teatr dramatyczny, zarządzanie teatrem

Streszczenie. Artykuł wpisuje się w problematykę pedagogiki pracy i socjologii pracy – obie dyscypliny mają wspólne pola problemowe i kategorie pojęciowe (m.in. zawód). Pytanie, które stawiam w artykule, dotyczy czynników decydujących o trwałości urzędu dyrektorskiego w polskich teatrach publicznych. Materiałem empirycznym są m.in. wywiady swobodne, które przeprowadziłam

z Dyrektorem Jackiem Głombem i aktorami zatrudnionymi w kierowanej przez niego placówce. Analiza specyfiki zarządzania Teatrem im. Heleny Modrzejewskiej w Legnicy pokazuje splot czynników egzogennych i endogennych sprzyjających utrzymaniu władzy w instytucji teatralnej. Wyjątkowość owego ‘zarządzania w kulturze’ może być wzorem dla innych liderów, decydujących się na prowadzenie teatru.

Introduction

In the Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 7 August 2014 on the classification of professions and specialities for the needs of the labour market, there appeared the category of a “general and managing director”, while in the search engine of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (created in 2020) there is already such profession as a theatre director; moreover, its main and additional tasks are defined. A synthetic description of the profession includes the main functions of the director, who: „Directs the work of the theatre within the scope of the powers and authorisations granted in accordance with the applicable legislation; plans and distributes the tasks of the theatre’s administrative and technical staff; implements the theatre’s artistic programme; supervises and maintains relations with subcontractors, service providers, etc.” (Classification of Occupations).

In Polish public theatres, the procedure for selecting the director is set out in the *Act of 25 October 1991* (Journal of Laws 1991, No. 114, item 493). Two forms are accepted – a competition and a non-competitive selection by the theatre’s organiser (central authorities in the case of a few theatres and local authorities in most of them). In the first case, a nine-member commission, consisting of representatives of the theatre organiser (three persons), the Minister of Culture (two persons), trade union organisations operating in the institution or representatives of employees (two persons) and professional or creative associations (two persons), selects the director from among the applications submitted.

With the consent of the Minister of Culture, the theatre organiser may select the director by themselves (the so-called “director from the portfolio”) but is obliged to justify such a procedure and discuss the profile of the nominated candidate (competence, formal background, professional experience, etc.). In addition, the theatre organiser is obliged to consult with representatives of trade unions and professional associations and to take their opinions on the candidate into account in the selection. This mode of selection is highly controversial and generates discussions – various entities of the theatre social world perceive

the “directorship” issue differently (for example, the Union of Polish Stage Artists considers the competition to be optimal – because it is transparent and non-arbitrary – a form of selecting directors). ZASP is of the opinion that a theatrical institution should be managed by a tandem – an art director supported by an administrative director (manager), while the Association of Theatre Directors prefers a managerial authority which has, above all, organisational competencies.

In practice, there are different models of authority in Polish drama theatres: 1) one-person authority (the director is the general manager and at the same time holds the position of an art director); 2) a tandem in which the general manager is an artist collaborating with a deputy for economic matters; 3) a tandem in which the general authority is held by the manager, while the deputy settles artistic issues and is responsible for the theatre’s repertoire line.

It is worth mentioning that in public theatres (not only drama theatres) the positions of director and manager are held mainly by men (80%) (*Theatre in Poland*, 2016, p. 49).

Managing a cultural institution

A skilful director who manages public funds prudently and frugally and does not generate debt for the institution he or she manages is more likely to remain as a theatre director. A satisfactory financial balance sheet of a cultural institution is a relevant factor for a favourable evaluation of the management’s activities. Theatres operating in a free market economy must be subject to financial discipline. This sometimes leads to a macdonaldisation of the theatre, to officials treating it like an enterprise that has to be profitable, to make a profit. Rules, procedures, and regulations are supposed to contribute to its smooth functioning. The management has to pursue an austerity programme, sometimes at the expense of the artistic quality of the performances. One director’s statement is characteristic: „I have introduced positions combining several functions – the stage manager has taken over the wardrobe duties, the cleaner takes care of the costume storeroom, the literary manager and the cultural specialist take care of creating the image of the theatre, i.e. they do what in other theatres could be taken care of by a PR person and so on. This solution is currently optimal for us. We are prevented from creating more jobs by our limited ability to raise finance” (Michalak, 2015).

Of the two basic styles of organisational management (autocratic and democratic), the latter, the participatory style, yields far better results: “Democratic

management is based on a positive attitude towards subordinates and cooperation between the supervisor and the team. Co-workers are involved in the process of setting the organisation's goals and ways of achieving them and are motivated to participate in the development of managerial decisions. The democratic manager trusts subordinates and "delegates" authority and is part of the responsibility for the execution of the organisation's sub-goals. Democratic management is based on the participation of employees in the management process, empowering them within the limits set by their knowledge and skills. Democracy in an organisation does not mean abandoning hierarchy and discipline and tolerating behaviour that is against the organisation's norms. It is only basing the management process on trust in subordinates and consists in inspiring them to actively, and not coercively, realise the organisation's goals" (Czermiński, Grzybowski, Ficoń, 1999, p.75).

Implementing at least some elements of democratic-type management in a public theatre, including actors in co-decision-making on matters of importance to the theatre, and caring for the staff are frequent demands made to the management by members of the artistic group (Zimnica-Kuzioła, 2018, pp.65-78).

It is a truism to state that the manager fulfils a key role in the team and the success of the organisation largely depends on his or her predisposition. Nevertheless, according to Daniel Goleman, the best teams are characterised by the high emotional competencies of the members: empathy, cooperation, open communication ("setting clear norms and expectations, and having frank conversations"), striving for improvement ("giving weight to each other's opinions"), self-awareness ("in the form of assessing the team's strengths and weaknesses"), confidence in the members' capabilities, the flexibility of approach to collective action, organisational awareness ("imaginative use of what the company has to offer"), "forming bonds with other teams" (Goleman, 1999, p. 307). Soft skills are important in the management of cultural institutions. Actors will defend a director against dismissal if they find support and understanding in them. Sometimes they make attempts to influence the results of competitions, as Krzysztof Orzechowski, a former general and artistic director of the Bagatela Theatre (1997-1999) and the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre in Kraków (1999-2016), writes: "Artistic companies have made various efforts in the last season to gain significant influence in filling director positions [...]. Legal conditions, and competition regulations did not allow the ensembles to show effective initiative.

What was left was lobbying the authorities announcing the competition, media campaigns, and drawing audiences into the fray” (Orzechowski, 2017, p. 156).

Artistic activities of the theatre

In assessing the theatre’s activities, industry awards, and successes, not only local ones (successful participation of the theatre in festivals, good reviews in the national press, recognition of actors at national and international reviews, theatre confrontations) are important. It is not in the interest of the authorities-organisers of this institution to dismiss the director of a theatre, who is in charge of a theatre that evokes lively resonance among critics. However, it is worth making some reservations about the above statement. Observation of the social world of theatre leads to the conclusion that the artistic activity of the theatre, if it is to be long-term and unobjectionable, should represent the “middle” repertoire rather than the avant-garde. Proposing “revolutionary” changes can have unpleasant consequences – Sebastian Majewski’s brief stewardship of the Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Łódź may serve as an example. His artistic programme of “new theatre”, “essay theatre”, was rejected by professional and non-professional audiences alike because it was too much of a *novum* in relation to the theatre formula audiences and critics in Łódź had become accustomed to.

Some directors, in response to the expectations of theatre organisers, are trying to broaden the cultural offer of the establishments they manage, and are also acquiring external sources of funding for multidisciplinary projects. They offer theatre workshops, educate young people, and invite audiences to concerts, exhibitions and meetings with artists. Sometimes this enrichment of the offer is met with opposition from the artistic staff, especially if it is at the expense of the core activity of preparing and presenting theatrical performances (situation at Warsaw’s Studio Theatre, publicised in the media in 2015 and 2016: actors accused the director [among other things] of commercialising the theatre, of excessive diversification of artistic activities (cf. Jarząbek, 2016).

External factors determining the sustainability of the directorship

The longevity of the directorship in a theatre is undoubtedly determined by good relations with the organisers/local authorities, with the officials deciding the fate of the theatre. An excellent illustration of the coalition between

the different worlds, and at the same time a presentation of the causal mechanisms in the theatre world, can be the election of the artistic director of the Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Łódź, Sebastian Majewski (who took the position in 2015 largely thanks to the “recommendation system”). The local press wrote about a meeting between the Rector of the PWSFTiT Mariusz Grzegorzek and the Marshal of the Voivodeship, at which the Rector presented his (previously approved by the artistic team of the Stefan Jaracz Theatre) candidacy (Grzegorzek, 2015, pp. 8-9). Grzegorzek asserted that he wanted to help the theatre and the company (with which he had a special bond through his twenty years of working at this very theatre) to choose a suitable, competent person. Grzegorzek describes in detail his involvement in filling the managerial position in “his” theatre: “I met with the company once at the express request of the actors themselves [...]. A kind of energetic blockade developed between the company and the management. When there was a vacancy after Waldemar Zawodziński’s resignation, I found out from Sebastian Majewski, who was then managing the Stary Theatre in Krakow together with Jan Klata, that Majewski would be ready to take responsibility for Jaracz’s artistic programme. I had observed Majewski during my work on *Woyzeck* in Krakow, and it seemed to me that he was an artist who presented an opportunity for a dangerous but necessary fusion of what was strongest in “Jaracz” (i.e. clever, in-depth acting) with a new, refreshing approach to the repertoire. I introduced Sebastian to the ensemble and then began the long process of vetting other candidates selected by the ensemble, including Jacek Orłowski, and Maciej Nowak, in which I did not interfere in any way. And I only met with the Marshal to ask whether, in the event that the team’s candidacy came up, the Marshal would be willing to consider the proposal” (Grzegorzek, 2015, p. 9). I have quoted Grzegorzek’s extensive statement because it exemplifies typical initiatives taken by participants in the social world of theatre. Representatives of the theatre community do not want matters relevant to the basic operation to be decided solely by participants in the political world.

The situation described above also shows the great role of the local authority, which has a lot to say in matters fundamental to theatre life. Behind Grzegorzek stood both formal, designated, institutional authority (his position as rector of the theatre school at the time) and informal authority (the trust of actors – Jaracz Theatre’s colleagues, the personal bond between them). Grzegorzek was undoubtedly perceived by the authorities as a man of great experience and professional competence; on the other hand, his meeting with the actors – at their invitation – also testifies to his environmental legitimacy. The issue of social

recognition is well summarised by Anna Mikołajko: “Every social group creates a set of roles specific to it, called authority. They are connected with the need to maintain social identities and with the necessity to regulate collective life; they also determine the stratification of the community. Authority is always a support of stability: it stands guard over a certain order” (Mikołajko, 2004, p. 24).

It is worth noting the fact of measurable “profitability” of good cooperation between a theatre institution and city or province authorities. Correct relations between representatives of both worlds (institutions) can – among other things – translate into the number of subsidies granted for the basic activities of a given theatre institution or into the funding of selected projects submitted to local competitions.

Successful cooperation between collective actors in the social world of theatre also determines individual fates. A person who builds good relations with local authorities and is versed in local arrangements has a greater chance of staying on as a director (Świąćicka, 2015, pp. 146-147). An exemplification can be found in the statement of Maciej Nowak, who reveals the backstage of his engagement at the Wybrzeże Theatre in Gdańsk and his dismissal (his public discourse may surprise with the degree of openness and bluntness of the wording): “People from outside don’t like it because they don’t lick boots, they don’t drink vodka with their superiors [...]. I have a deep conviction that if I came into this environment, if I was well aligned with everyone, then probably nothing would happen. Only I, and this is perhaps my stupidity, did not want to enter any local arrangements” (Świąćicka, 2015, p. 147). Of course, this is a subjective view of the director, as the financial indebtedness of the institution he runs is no secret. The same participant in the social world of theatre (and at the same time the first director of the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute), shows what usually belongs to the secretive sphere, and is kept silent in the official discourse. In his memoirs, the Theatre Institute came into being thanks to the favour of an acquaintance of the minister for this initiative (the idea of such an institution was close to Professor Zbigniew Raszewski): “With the concept, I go to the then Minister of Culture Waldemar Dąbrowski, whom I have known since I was a child because he is my father’s colleague. He starts to like the idea and as soon as the community notices that the establishment of the institute is feasible, he takes a new position. Now they are outraged at what right some Nowak has to do it” (Świąćicka, 2015, p. 153). In the social world of theatre – as in any other world – the undercurrent of official action is overshadowed by a rich spectrum of behind-the-scenes activities, informal arrangements by decision-makers, and

quiet conversations about professional issues held at coffee tables. The official interpretation of human action becomes, to use the language of Vilfred Pareto, a derivative that justifies the undercurrent of social life.

A case study – Jacek Głomb’s management at the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre in Legnica

I devote this part of the article to Jacek Głomb’s directorship, which I understand as the way in which he performed the function of a director. This artist and manager has been recognised by the theatre community and has received many awards, including ones for directing performances presented at the Legnica theatre¹. He is one of the record-holders in Poland, holding the post for several decades (the “longest” manager has been Maciej Englert at the Warsaw Contemporary Theatre, since 1981). On the occasion of his 25th anniversary at the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre in Legnica, which Jacek Głomb celebrated in 2019, Grzegorz Żurawiński wrote: “Today, the creator, who comes from Tarnów, is in charge of the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre, a cultural institution of the local government of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship co-run by the municipal government of Legnica. Over the past quarter of a century, the organisational form in which the Legnica stage has operated has changed three times. However, the director did not change, although – also on three occasions – representatives of the authorities attempted to dismiss him from his post. Unsuccessfully [...] However, the head of the Legnica stage perceives the greatest threat to himself and the institution he directs differently. “The key one was the “attack on the theatre”, which the Mayor of Legnica Tadeusz Krzakowski – who is still in office today – tried to carry out in the summer of 2008. The theatre’s account was blocked by a bailiff, I was accused of mismanagement, and cases were referred to the prosecutor’s

¹ Jacek Głomb received, among others, the Kazimierz Dejmek Award „for a theatre director who has been particularly friendly to Polish contemporary drama in the last twenty years”; in 2018 he was honoured with the Zygmunt Hübner „Man of the Theatre” Award; <https://www.teatr.legnica.pl/teatr/dyrektor> (27.12.2019). In 2021, he was awarded the „Theatre” Special Prize „for his long-term, consistent and creative management of the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre in Legnica. Under his hand, the Legnica stage has become a unique place on the theatrical map of Poland”, <https://legnica.naszemiasto.pl/jacek-glomb-dyrektor-teatru-modrzejewskiej-w-legnicy/ar/c13-8483377> (22.11.2021). In the interview that director Głomb gave me, the satisfaction, but also a slight reserve towards the awards he receives, becomes apparent: „When you’re 53 years old, awards are approached with a slight distance. They confirm that we have taken the right direction. But I don’t do festival theatre, I’m not interested in doing something ‚for a festival’. I make important productions for my city, and the fact that they become important for Poland as well is additionally motivating” (Interview with Jacek Głomb, 2017).

office and the public finance ombudsman. The timing of the attack was well chosen, as I was busy directing my film debut, *Operation Danube*. However, I was supported by the city councillors with a grant and the charges were dropped. So I decided to “reverse the alliances” and find a new organiser for the theatre. I had many talks with councillors of the voivodeship assembly of various options from PO, Samoobrona and PiS, as well as with the Marshals of Lower Silesia. I convinced them to make the Lower Silesian local government the main organiser of the Legnica theatre. And this is what happened in the spring of 2009. If it had not succeeded, I would not be in Legnica,” recalls Jacek Głomb.” (Żurawiński, 2019). Several conclusions can be drawn from this statement – such a long tenure as the director requires great mental toughness, diplomatic skills, and determination. The director needs to be a good strategist, seeking allies to support him in his endeavours. His rhetorical skills, and his ability to persuade, are therefore not insignificant. It is important for the director to be proactive, to take concrete action to maintain the office. One cannot be a pawn being moved around the political chessboard – inactivity, abandonment of efforts, and resignation will undoubtedly result in loss of office. Director Głomb’s resolute attitude (he has been called a “tamer of officials”, a “fighter” and even a “troublemaker”) and successful efforts to win the support of the decision-makers resulted in his contract being extended. Here is how the director himself described the situation: „I proposed to Marshal Cezary Przybylski that he appointed me for another term. After consulting with the minister, the mayor of Legnica (he co-manages the theatre), and the trade unions, he decided to entrust me with this function out of competition” (Ćwiertniewicz, 2018). Two words are significant in this statement: „I proposed to the marshal” – it was the director who came up with the initiative, and presented his candidacy. Also in 2021, the Board of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship gave Jacek Głomb a credit of confidence – he was given the opportunity to continue as director – without competition – for the next five years. Of course, Jacek Głomb’s endeavours might not have been successful had it not been for his artistic achievements and accomplishments recognised by participants in the social world of theatre in Poland.

Therefore, let us recall the beginnings of the Theatre in Legnica. One of the actors of the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre said in an interview with me: „The beginnings of this theatre were 40 people on stage, including the orchestra, and there were 15 people in the audience. It was a sad town from which the Russians had left, general apathy and gloom. And suddenly a man arrives who has an idea and energy. He draws a clear profile for the theatre – getting out

of the building, moving the performances to the factory halls, to the community centres, to the ruined cinemas, closer to the people, and he tells about these people, about something that concerns them. He tells the story of the city, the story of ethnic groups, of minorities. And suddenly these people understood... Now when we premiere, the audience is full. This audience had to be accustomed to, brought up and taught. And that's where this going out into the city came from. It was not an initiative, but a profile of the theatre. Then other theatres started to imitate it. Other theatres started to copy the idea of telling their local stories in historical places in the city [...] I'm in a good position of having worked from the beginning in a place created by Jacek Głomb. And he created this place, with this group of people. We have the feeling that we participated in this creation, in building such a theatre, and that we managed to do something together, to achieve something together. And there is satisfaction and pride in that. The fact that the theatre has a good reputation is not only thanks to Jacek but to the whole team" (Interview with an actor from the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre in Legnica)². The author of the above statement appreciates his supervisor for his creative enthusiasm, ingenuity and, what is worth emphasising, also for his ability to create an ensemble of actors who feel they are co-hosts of the theatre. It is extremely important to integrate a group made up of individuals and this has also been achieved in Legnica. My interviewees state: „The basis of any theatre and any ensemble is the buffet. If a director tells me that he has problems integrating the ensemble, that every actor chases each other after a performance, then he must have a proper cafeteria. And not the canteen-kind. Soft sofas... Jacek bought a plasma TV, when there are matches nobody watches at home, we just meet here" (Interview with an actor from the Helena Modrzejewska

² The director of the H. Modrzejewska Theatre presented the essence of his artistic activity in a synthetic way: „I had the opportunity, which rarely any director in Poland has, to build everything from scratch. To build an artistic and technical team, to build a work ethos, a catalogue of principles, to think about theatre using theatre. We are realising a project of theatre in alliance with the audience, a project of theatre close to the audience, of social or political theatre even. A theatre that also speaks with classical texts about important issues that are outside the window. The second thing we have built the character of our theatre on is the exploration of urban space. We do a lot of projects outside the building, we restore certain ruined, degraded places in Legnica through theatre, we bring them to life. This is a very important mission for us, one that we are proud of. The third thing is performances written with local people, local stories, tales. We talk to people, we look for these stories, then we make plays out of them, Legnica, as you know, is a very interesting city. In the 1960s it was a Tower of Babel and Polish was not at all the loudest language on the streets. There were Russians, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Roma, Lemkos, Macedonians, Greeks, etc. A multicultural society. Legnica is a city of 100,000 people. The relations between them were intense. And we are making a theatre about that too. Five or six plays have been produced. Serious titles have been created just like that" (Interview with Jacek Głomb, 2017).

Theatre in Legnica); „There is social life in the theatre... we are quite hermetic because we don't have time. The cool thing is that we, after the performances, don't go home straight away, but we sit in the dressing room, in the buffet and talk, not necessarily about the play. We talk and talk. Sometimes this return home is delayed and we get back at one or two o'clock. And that happens a lot. It happens in other theatres that people don't talk to each other. They undress in the dressing room after the performance and quickly run home. I wouldn't like that model. We all know each other well, we like each other... it's nice for us to spend time together” (Interview with actors from the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre in Legnica). The situation outlined above is a rarity in Polish drama theatres, especially in large cities it is difficult to find this kind of intimacy between members of the artistic team. In many of the interviews I conducted with actors in Polish public drama theatres, there was a theme of a loss of bonds and a certain loneliness among artists who lack the time to maintain friendly interpersonal relations on a daily basis.

Jacek Głomb strives for a good atmosphere in the ensemble he manages and, moreover, in exceptional situations (when one of the actors receives an interesting, valuable extra-theatrical proposal) he allows them to take part in such a venture: „Actors are my... maybe not all best friends, but we live closely with each other. They are my friends. I have a lot of positive emotions with some (most) of them, also it is normal that they ask. I'm very supportive of the storylines, as much as they can get into the film, we often do repertory puzzles just to allow them some substitutions. Or we arrange the repertory for a certain actor so that they are in the storyline and so that they learn” (Interview with Jacek Głomb, 2017). Director Głomb strongly emphasises the communal, but uncoerced or pressure-free, nature of interpersonal relations within the ensemble: „We are not a commune in the theatre, I want you to understand that very well. We work together every day, and then everyone has the right to freedom. Most actors have families, children, and partners outside the theatre. They also have another world, schools, etc.” (Interview with Jacek Głomb, 2017).

In organising the artistic work of the Legnica ensemble, the strategy of eliminating dissatisfaction caused by the exploitation of the same actors over and over again is important: „This model of theatre we practise is an ensemble model. The actors all play in most of the performances. This is a value. That's why there is no room for frustration and no room for arguments in the buffet. This is our choice” (Interview with Jacek Głomb, 2017). This is confirmed by the members of the artistic team: „We are not actors on the move, because we have been

working for 20 years in one theatre. And we play in all the productions here. Jacek organises this work in such a way that we don't "warm the bench", but play absolutely everyone in this ensemble. There are 17 of us, so everyone has a job, and everyone does their job every day. Except for Monday, of course, although sometimes even Monday is busy"; „It depends on the director's determination whether everyone plays, sometimes the director invites the director and makes a condition: "but you have to hire everyone", and it often succeeds. Or you divide the ensemble in half and some do the premiere this month, others two months later" (Interview with actors at the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre in Legnica).

Director Jacek Głomb does not call his style of management democratic, because he is the leader and has a decisive voice in all important issues concerning the theatre, but he emphasises that he comes from alternative theatre and these experiences have shaped his way of organising collective action: „I come from alternative theatre, the kind of theatre where the ensemble, the cause, the idea is the most important thing. From the Theatre of the Eighth Day, from Theatre 77 from Łódź. I am a child of Lech Raczak and Zdzisław Hejduk. Their theatre "brought me up". So I went to theatre school not to be an artist, but to say important things in theatre. Because theatre is an important thing. It's much less important in society than it used to be, but that doesn't mean that we artists should disregard theatre. The team spirit, and the spirit of ideas also patronises what I do in Legnica. I have always wanted to run a theatre, even more than directing plays myself. I have the genes of a leader. I was more interested in that than in making my own titles" (Interview with Jacek Głomb, 2017). In interviews, the director likes to emphasise the significant role of actors in shaping the image of the Legnica stage: „These are Renaissance actors, because they also direct, write plays, poems, paint. They are not just performers. They are creators, and co-creators of what we do in Legnica. For me, they are more than just actors" (Interview with Jacek Głomb, 2017).

What is noteworthy about the Legnica theatre is the work ethos, unchanged since the company's inception. The director calls his theatre "old-fashioned", in the sense that it follows rules sanctioned by tradition: „I try to make theatre be important, so that the actor is focused on his work so that they don't answer their mobile phone during rehearsal, so that they don't whistle in the theatre, so that they respect their partner, learn the text quickly, etc. [...]. This is respect for a long-standing tradition. It's clear that today many things are looked down upon. Every young actor needs to be taught this respect because that's not what

they're taught in schools. They need to be taught the work ethos" (Interview with Jacek Głomb, 2017).

As far as the ideological meaning of his performances is concerned, Jacek Głomb prefers a "theatre of hope", he would like performances with a "happy ending" that "lighten up", and "help in life". Nevertheless, he creates theatre firmly rooted in the *sic et nunc*, socially and politically engaged. Criticism of reality does not always go hand in hand with optimism, which is why the ideal of art that lifts spirits and gives life strength is not often embodied in the material of performances presented at the Legnica theatre.

Conclusions

The longevity of a directorship is determined by a synergy of many factors, both external (the political situation and the conditions in which the theatre operates) and internal, related to the personality of the director in power and their artistic and managerial competencies. Jacek Głomb undoubtedly belongs to the professional elite, he fulfils the three conditions for belonging to the category of elite artists, outlined by a well-known theatre practitioner settled in this universe: he has "the acceptance of his environment, social recognition and influence, and a connection to authority" (Orzechowski, 2017, p. 29). He is one of the few directors who have avoided having to "move on" to another theatre or to another professional activity. He has held the position of managing director of the Legnica stage for several decades. He is a charismatic leader, respected by the staff of the institution he manages, and appreciated by local theatre organisers, whom he has been able to convince, and is still able to convince of the formula of the Helena Modrzejewska Theatre. He does not put the institution into debt, proving his managerial skills. The awards he has received (including the Konrad Swinarski directing award, highly regarded in the industry, or the Kazimierz Dejmek award honouring the director of a contemporary theatre, and above all the Zygmunt Hübner „Man of the Theatre” award) strengthen his position in this universe.

It is worth adding that the theatre from Legnica had the opportunity to present itself to a wide audience in Poland, as many performances were transferred to television (e.g. *Made in Poland*, *III Furies*, *Passion*, *Ballada o Zakaczu*, *Wschody i Zachody Miasta*, *Orkiestra*, *Zabijanie Gomułki*).

The answer to the question of the factors determining the permanence of a directorship in Polish public drama theatres is not simple. Perhaps one needs

to be an artist, passionate about theatre, proposing new artistic quality, a person of great rational, emotional and spiritual intelligence; one needs to be a skilful manager, able to maintain the financial discipline of the theatre; one needs to skilfully present the products of one's artistic activity to a wider audience. The art of managing a public theatre for many years is something very few people in Poland succeed in. The practice of theatre life shows that even meeting the conditions outlined above is sometimes not enough – a theatre organiser can force through – without the approval of the artistic community – their candidate for the post of director. Such a situation is also allowed by law.

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