

PAN.OPTIKUM Action Theatre Ensemble

DER STURM [THE TEMPEST]

developed in 2012

PAN.OPTIKUM performs the TEMPEST as a fairy tale fable:

The conflicting human emotions, in the form of Prospero's thoughts, manifest themselves in the figures surrounding him. The poetic language is expressed musically.

The result is an almost intimate form which entreats one to let oneself be swept off by Shakespeare's Prospero: The borders separating "actual" and "play", separating reality and fiction, become blurred - and the realization of the finiteness of our life becomes the most important prerequisite of every realization:

"These our actors, as I foretold you, were all spirits, and are melted into air, into thin air. And like the baseless fabric of this vision, the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces ... We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

The story starts with a shipwreck which is an actual occurrence as well as a symbol: life - a shipwreck. Dangers loom from many corners: a person is subject to natural forces as well as to dangers which come from within. And on an uncharted island, strange monsters may not be the greatest threat. Instead humans are the most dangerous animal to humans.

Prospero, once a powerful duke, but then a victim of political intrigue, was able to rescue himself and his daughter on an island - where he deepens his knowledge of sorcery and makes two opposite creatures his subjects: The grounded earth creature Caliban and the freedom-loving air spirit Ariel. With Ariel's help, Prospero succeeds in prevailing over his old enemies. But not even on the practically deserted island does the eternal game of power and love end.

This production deals with questions which elude quick, clichéd answers: What does freedom mean? Can we heal emotional injuries which, as parts of the shipwreck of the past, determine our present, and re-create a complete whole?

Can the human hunger for power be kept within bounds or will it inevitably continue to cause new dramas? Is it possible to achieve a meaningful equilibrium between the realms of power on the one hand and science and art on the other?

After an injustice has been suffered, is it possible for empathy to prevail over the wish for revenge? Can we attain self-control as a prerequisite of "good command"? Or does it necessarily remain in danger of being (ship)wrecked? Might it be a realistic alternative to forgo all "magic" and all manipulation and accept one's own weaknesses, as Prospero himself does in the end?

Shakespeare's handles these questions in his late work with virtuosity: hinted at as tragedy, they are comically varied and extend all the way to the farcical.