



Emotional Twists and Turns of Self-discovery on the Stage of “Jūras vārti”

On 19 October at 13.00 the non-governmental professional theatre “Dirty Deal Teatro” will perform “Drama Queen” at the Theatre House “Jūras vārti”, presenting Ukrainian actress and director Sofiya Melnikova’s experience of being a refugee, vivid emotions and personal life experiences.

This real-life story started with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and continued with her escape from the war-torn Kharkiv to Riga. “This is the story of how the war turned me into a drama queen. How do I survive refugees, fear, loneliness, failed love and the break-up of an eight-year relationship? The play is based on my memories of refugees, the story of how I found myself in Riga and the emotional twists and turns on the way there,” says Sofya Melnikova, the playwright of the play and the main actress.

Shortly after the premiere last December, theatre critic Toms Čevers wrote: “Although we know nothing about the performer’s previous creative output, her approach to the text is original, with not a hint of overly melodramatic gestures, contrary to the play’s title. It is characterised by a seemingly neutral intonation, at times Sofya Melnikova smiles nervously, as if what is being said does not apply to her. But at the same time she is completely relaxed and allows herself to move to the rhythms of the dance music stored in her body’s memory. Perhaps this distancing is also the only opportunity for public reflection on the immediate and recent experience of war. We can therefore only helplessly imagine what emotional resources the artist mobilises during this hour and a half. Although the creators of the performance do not manage to sustain a tension that matches the intensity of Sofya Melnikova’s documentary experience throughout, her frankness is disarmingly human.”

“Drama Queen” has been nominated for the “Spelmaņu nakts” Award for “Small Form Play of the Year”.

The play is included in the project “Latvian School Bag” and is suitable for senior pupils, as well as everyone interested.



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