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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Jungle Book Reimagined

Burgtheater, ImpulsTanz Festival, 01.08.2022 [ENA]

The Jungle Book Reimagined is a magical modern dance performance which tells its spectators the classical story of Mowgli of the author Rudyard Kipling in conditions of modern challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, and the impact of humans on the world of animals.

The Jungle Book Reimagined is a scenario of how the future world might look like in case if humans continue with the current exploitation of the nature. Water will be playing one of the major roles in this world where some regions will be deprived from this resource and will become the driest regions in the world and other ones will have it in abundance and surplus resulting in damaging floods.

The story starts from a tragic event in an Indian family which is torn apart during the flood disaster caused by climate change. The strange new jungle was formed on the ruins of cities which were destroyed by natural disasters and a child must survive in this new environment. Love and empathy facilitate integration of Mowgli, who is a girl, in this environment. And it turns out that the worst and most aggressive animal is not a bear or a giant snake but a human with a gun, who however after several killing is being swept at the end of the performance by a giant wave.

The story of Mowgli is also performed from the point of view of climate change refugee who is facing several challenges in condition of modern cities while being faced by the struggle for survival.

The Jungle Book Reimagined is a dive into myths of today and the children's stories of tomorrow. The story of Mowgli is observed through the eyes of today's children who are the current and will become the future storytellers of Mowli.

It is also about living in the uncertain conditions of the modern world where so many challenges exist because human beings forgot their connection to their home, to the planet of Earth, to the nature, to the environment. They forgot that this is a unique and only one home to everybody, which is fragile, and which should be treated carefully and with respect.

Akram Khan who is the leader of the Jungle Book Reimagined performance played the role of Mowgli by himself as a young boy in one Indian dance performance. This experience brought him three lessons which he carries throughout his entire life.

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First, that there is commonality between species. Second, that there is a binding interdependence between humans, animals, and nature. Thirds, that there is a sense of family and our need to belonging. The believe of Akram Khan is that the story of interactions between humans and nature could be the best told through the magic of dance, music and theatre. This is combined with the fantastic stage building and light influence further the impression.

The brilliant team of several world known artists contributed to the development of the performance. The script was written by Tariq Jordan, dramaturgy by Sharon Clark and original score by Jocelyn Pook. The sound design was developed by Michael Hulls. The visual stage design of Miriam Buether and the video design and animation by YeastCulture combined innovative technological elements and the new visual technology which turned the stage into a magical world of juggles and myths.

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