

FIFTY YEARS DIFFERENCE - WHEN DO WE START TO LEARN FROM ONE OTHER

The project "FIFTY YEARS DIFFERENCE" is an integrative theatre show, written, created and performed by youngsters and seniors of five European countries. The idea is to organise meetings in different European countries with youths and seniors to initiate an exchange / approach, working on themes as fascism and racism focussing on the generation conflict - problems which are persistent part of our history and society. The project starts with a phase of research and ends with a theatre show. The awareness of historical and cultural connections on a European level is to be deepened by the interchange of the different generations and cultural / historical background. Participants as well as spectators are to discover parallels and to experience what is separating generations and nations from each other.

Old and youths at the age of 15 up to 25 and 65 up to 75 of different European countries (Poland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, Germany) create together a theatre show. Proceeding from the question „what do the juveniles have to do with the past of the generation of their grandfathers? - how are the old concerned by their grandchildren? What can they tell each other about each other? What does history, society mean to them and how is it represented by those attitudes, impressions.

Old and youths are in a threshold situation: they are not yet or no longer integrative part of the working process of society. Therefore, they are treated without respect, they don't count. They are isolated. The disintegration of traditional family structures is separating them from each other. They don't know how to deal with each other and stand aside. They are losing contact to their past and present history. This disorientation causes an increasing helpless delimitation, a flight into stereotyped ideas of social roles and enemy figures which are to be viewed and treated in the course of the project.

Following themes can be explored:

- Fascism until 1945 - racism up to now - when do we start to learn from one another
- European present and past in social-cultural comparison of interchange of the generations.
- How to initiate communication between those poles of society (young and old people).
- How does the generation gap present itself in the various European countries?
- What can the European neighbours tell one another about one's own history?

A meeting with all multipliers of the co-operating institutions who supervise the project takes place in February 2000. The meeting leads to knowledge for to instruct the participating groups (youths and seniors) how to search and collect material, how to work out questionnaires and how to develop the material into scenes for the final theatre show. Regular meetings of the participating groups (youths and seniors) take place where experiences, impressions, results are presented to each other by web side and videoconference. Between the partners the most suitable questions will be decided. Groups of three to five young and old people start the research, collect material by interviewing inhabitants, persons of the same and different age, people they know and people they don't know, friends, relatives etc. The answers will be collected and analysed. They work co-operatively: each will collect information's for the other. The results belong to everybody from the first to the last moment of the project production. They will be evaluated statistically and prepared as a complex of information for the final theatre production. The results will be transformed into scenes and sketches, with or without text, dance-choreographs, instrumental compositions may be created out of this material as well. Theatre practitioners from Interkunst will rehearse the proposals during several days in April 2000. Professional actors will take part as well as all participants who are involved in the project. They attend these rehearsals to check their ideas and to learn about the process. They may also take part as performers as well as musicians, technicians, costume designers, publicity makers etc.

The European Theatre tour through all the co-operating cities takes place in June 2000. The best ideas and presentations will be presented as a professional theatre show. The performance lasts 70 minutes. The size of the audience should vary between 100 and 300 persons. The main audience are Youngsters and Seniors. A discussion with the audience takes place after each show. Each country can settle between one and three performances.