From the Festival „Wunder der Prärie" at Mannheim:
With „Tonight, lights out" everything works

An unforgettable theatre-event

By our colleague Dennis Baranski

A mysterious phenomenon haunts every year Egypt's capital: when colder airmasses fix warmer ones over Cairo, and when rice growers in the Nile-delta burn their straw, a "dark cloud" gets its grip on the megacity. On the occasion of the festival "Wunder der Prärie" David Weber-Krebs picked this environmental disaster up and gave it a much wider significance: in his theatre-performance "Tonight, lights out" which had its premiere in Mannheim's Künstlerhaus Zeitraumexit, the cloud becomes the symbol of the dark side of mankind.

As if it was from Thousand and One Nights a parable gently leads us into the world of young Ismael and directly beneath the ominous cloud. Being a Copt converted to Islam he lives, as his name indicates, between two world religions until the moment when a mysterious voice asks him to remain by night in the dark. "Of course, we do not know what exactly happened there". With these words the talented storyteller Maarten Westra Hoekzema interrupts his detailed narration, and only the fabulous result remains: According to the legend, Ismael and a group of people of different ages, genders and religious backgrounds succeeded in dispelling the cloud.

The task is now to track down this mystical event. Equipped with a light switch and with a bulb which is connected thereto and dangles over the scene, the spectator becomes an active performer and assumes responsibility for himself and for the success of this subtly conceived and fragile dramaturgy. At the behest of the gentle master of ceremony, everybody switches off his light. Smoothly, a powerful darkness creeps over the room, and the multitude becomes an intimate community.

The departure into a better world seems imminent. Although this wholly peaceful moment is very short, its unique experience will remain unforgotten in our memories.

Mannheimer Morgen, 17th September 2011

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