

Triumphing over linguistic barriers – Carolina Maciel de Franca

Having watched Platform 0090 closely now for over a few months, at first I found myself inclined to compare them to translators: they both handle source texts, target audiences, crossing borders...not obviating the fact that both theatre as translation have more to them than mere linguistics. A great example is Sahika Tekand's *PLAY* coming to BOZAR. *PLAY*, already a tightly timed, rhythmic play on lights when performed in Turkey, then gave the Brussels audience an additional bilingual su(pe)rtitling to deal with. Needless to say, the technicalities of surtitling (i.e. allowing the viewer 6 seconds to read the translation, surtitler's inability to anticipate improvisation) were rather incompatible with the fast-paced product Sahika presented the Belgian audience.

However, when ignoring the translation in order to just enjoy the show, one would find that the surtitling was a mere formality compared to the whole, as were the dialogues in Turkish for those who spoke Turkish. Literally on the spotlight here, was Sahika's ability to use light to trigger, time and stop speech, ultimately leading the play on sound and light to become music. Later, as I walked up to one of the light directors (Burçak Cöllü) I found out she was actually a pianist. The platform's merit lay, thus, in discerning the presence of enough elements of universality in the presented work of art.

The tongues of a body: Abattoir Fermé (GHOST)

Understanding how to go beyond the supposed barriers of linguistics, 0090 working with the predominantly visual Belgian theatre group Abattoir Fermé only seemed logical. In **GHOST**, Abattoir Fermé's usual suspects Kirsten Pieters, Tine Van den Wyngaert and Chiel van Berkel collaborate with Turkish performer Caglar Yigitogullari to prove – yet again - that the human body is one of the most powerful instruments one can use, regardless of the message you wish to convey.

Almost abstaining from the use of any language, the four successfully managed to embody director Stef Lernous' at times ghoulish (and declaredly not entirely fictional) visual tour through the extremes of the Mississippi, Georgia and Louisiana swamps. Having seen the play in Mechelen (Belgium), I was confident that it would work just as well or maybe even better when staged in Turkey.

Always expect the unexpected

And just as you were getting settled into the thought of art's power crossing a nation's merely geographic borders, in came reality. On June 11th, after having faced protests for over 10 days already, premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan's police force suddenly opens fire on thousands of demonstrators at Istanbul's Gezi Park, literally blowing and wiping them away with tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets.

On *GHOST* premier day June 12th, protest epicentre Taksim Square (situated little over one mile from Garajistanbul) awakens empty, with hundreds of injured to be taken care of. With Erdogan declaring 'zero tolerance' towards the remaining protesters and the prospect of more casualties to come, Abattoir Fermé felt it inappropriate to stage the play and advertently decided to succumb under the weight of national politics and cancel the performance. Ironically enough, the *GHOST* posters spread throughout the city still managed to haunt the city in broad daylight.



