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SUMMERFOLK, *future without a past*

The project of 2012

Was the process of 1-½ years of rehearsals, try outs (in our own theater and BaltDom), research.

So far it is the largest project in the history of Theater Pokoleniy, involving the entire company, a number of guest artists and children/teenage actors and also an international team of three directors (Russia, USA, Germany) an American set designer, a team of international design students and a Russian composer.

Maxim Gorky's play "Summerfolk" (1904), the main literature source of this performance by itself is a large format: 26 parts and four acts and probably in duration of seven/eight hours, when you perform it, as it's written, without any cuts. The project of Theater Pokoleniy also adds other sources to the material that is performed, such as famous Poems by Maxim Gorky, facts of his contradictory biography, video footage of his funeral, scenes from Chekhov's "The Seagull" and Ibsen's "Nora", quotes from today's political essays and speeches, and protocols of Stalinist trials, a film version of Dachniki from 1964 and so on.

The three directors Danila Korogodsky, Christopher Barreca and Eberhard Köhler do not try to form one coherent aesthetic and valid interpretation throughout the entire evening. Quite the opposite they are in search of various, maybe contradictory perspectives and aesthetic perspectives all aiming at a translation of this powerful piece of more than hundred years old Russian Realism into today's reality.

Plot summary:

In front of the background of the first Russian revolution Gorky in 1904/05 writes a kind of paraphrase of Chekhov's CHAIKA, without a traditional plot around a main character. A group of more or less rich, educated members of Intelligentsia gather during their summer vacation on a Dacha. And they engage in an escalating argument about various concepts, how to build a better future. A large number of artists are amongst them, a writer, a poetess, a Dada Poet, a director, an actress, etc.

One group of them is convinced, that the fundament of political change is revealing and facing the dark spots of a cruel and painful past of the society, where as the other fraction prefers art as entertainment, and strongly formulates the right of getting rest, enjoying vacation and not being bothered by any form of political propaganda. What is the position of art, and especially of inside this conflict? Clearly taking sites in today's political struggles or retreating into l'art pou l'art?

The rich lawyer Bassov, whose marriage is in a crisis, invited a number of guests to his Dacha. Beside others a famous writer, an early love interest of his wife, and also his old friend an engineer, who's wife plays a lead part in a planned performance of a regional theater group and has a passionate affair, with the director of this company. The uncle of this engineer is a rich industrialist, who just sold all his factories because he couldn't compete with the German "Konkurrenz". The question, if this capital now could be "enjoyed" or if it has to be invested into a larger social project, splits the group of intellectuals more and more into two parties, which severely fight each other. A self confident, sexual independent single mother, who is obsessed by the idea, that the crimes of the past need to be faced and a desperately rehearsing group of young amateur-actors are the straw that break the camels neck.

„I believe, that we are accused by people without any memory“ Maria Aliohina (24 years) in her final plädoyer of Pussy Riot process.

This project allows us at the same time to relate to urgent questions of our today existence, while at the same time we can reflect the role of our own art – the theater. Is there any chance to change anything through an intellectual dialogue, while around the privileged ghetto the new revolutions (for example the Arab Spring) are already marching and changing the world?

This self reflection of the limited possibilities of art are and its contradictions are inspired by larger examples, for examples Godard's movie "Le Mepris".

Since Gorky's work in literature can not be separated from his role during time of SocRealism and since we observe almost a Cannon-like convention, how Russian Realist plays need to be staged in Russia, we find it very liberating and refreshing to search for new forms of expression on the bases of this incredible strong literature.

We believe that many people in our audience share our desire, to tell (and to be told) stories on a large scale, that are not imprisoned by this stupid rushing 80-minutes television format.

We will only find answers of the questions of our time, if we take a deep breath and allow ourselves to take enough time to watch the whole image. And anti cyclical behavior always includes a potential; if everybody rushes you need to slow down.

Theater Pokoleniy performs in a unique Loft Theater situation in an old factory space in Lachtinskaya Street, 15 minutes from the center of St. Petersburg. It is not a classical Proscenium studio theater but a space that allows a larger flexibility and has its own very specific charm and atmosphere.

Dachniki will be performed in two variants. A 5 hour 30 minutes evening of the entire arch, that starts at 17:00 o'clock. Or the first (act 1 &2) and second (act 3&4) half, that are each a theatrical event that can stand for itself and start at 19:00 o'clock.

The opening is part of the official year of German culture in Russia and is supported by the Goethe Institute Moscow, by Cal Arts /USA, the Culture Committee of St. Petersburg, and raum4 e.V. (Germany).

Excerpts from the 1966 film (directed by Boris Babochkin, Mosfilm studio), a famous photograph of Gorky's funeral on which Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich and Ordjonikidze carry an urn with Gorky's ashes to be berried in the Kremlin wall, are used in this production.

Maxim Gorky's poem "The Song of the Stormy Petrel", Satin's monologue from Maxim Gorky's "The Lower Depth", Nina's monologue from Anton Chekhov's "The Seagull" and Nora's monologue from Ibsen's play "The Doll House" are also used.

Directed by [Eberhard Köhler](#) (Germany), [Danila Korogodskiy](#) (Russia), [Christopher Barreca](#) (USA)

Set design [Danila Korogodsky](#) (Russia), [Christopher Barreca](#) (USA), [Jeffery Eisenmann](#) (USA)

Light [Jeffery Eisenmann](#) (USA), [Yuri Okahana](#) (Japan), [Amanda Knehans](#) (USA)

Music [Ivan Kushnir](#)

Sound [Ivan Kushnir](#), [Nikolay Fesenko](#)

Masks designed and constructed by [Robert Prior](#) (USA)

Movement [Natalia Medvedeva](#)

Light board operators [Polina Filippova](#), [Yana Botsova](#), [Nikita Gechan](#), [Amanda Knehans](#) (USA)

Sound board operators [Nikolay Fesenko](#), [Marisa Sierra](#) (USA)

Technical assistance is provided by a team of [design students from California State University](#), Long Beach (USA): [Jamie Froemming](#), [Margaret Weinert](#), [Brittany Blouch](#), [Junmei Fu](#), [Sojin Han](#), [Amanda Knehans](#), [Marisa Sierra](#), [Benjamin Lishner](#)

Project manager [Tatiana Koveshnikova](#)

Cast:

Sergey Vasilievitch Bassov, Lawyer, 40 — [Sergey Mardar](#)

Varvara Michailovna, his wife, 27 — [Tatiana Shuklina](#)

Kaleria, his sister, 29 — [Oksana Rysinskaya/Lidia Klirikova](#)

Vlas, brother of Bassov's wife, 25 — [Kirill Gusev/Nikita Barsukov](#)

Piotr Ivanovitch Suslov, Civil Engineer, 42 — [Aleksey Chuev](#)

Yulia Fillipovna, his wife, 30 — [Svetlana Smirnova](#)

Kyrill Akimovitch Dudakov, Physician, 40 — [Aleksander Bredel](#)

Olga Alekseyevna, his wife, 35 — [Natalia Ponomariova](#)

Yakov Petrovitch Shalimov, Writer, 40 — [Artyom Shilov](#)

Pavel Sergejevitch Ryumin, 32 — [Valentin Levitsky](#)

Marya Lvovna, Physician, 37 — [Natalia Medvedeva](#) and [Susanne Hoss](#)

Semion Semionytch Dvoetochie [Colon], Suslov's uncle, 55 — [Nikolay Ivanov/Nikolay Feoktisto](#)

Nikalay Petrovitch Zamyslov, Bassov's junior partner, 28 — [Stepan Beketov](#)

Pustobaika, First Watchman, 50 — [Ruslan Katsagadzhev/Dmitry Feoktistov](#)

Sasha, Bassovs Maid-Servant — [Regina Atsapkina/Natalia Fooks](#)

Stage manager — [Lubov Levitskaya](#)

Lovers of dramatic art — [Makar Diakov](#), [Ekaterina Zatseva](#), [Lidia Klirikova](#), [Anna Shamshura](#), [Dasha Romashkina](#)

