

Eva Turnová:

Eight compositions from the life of Ukrainians

On Good Friday, I watched the performance of the Archa Theatre "Eight compositions from the life of Ukrainians for a Western audience". The director, Jana Svobodová, used the emotional text of the young Ukrainian writer Anastasiia Kosodii, who started writing it right after the start of the war. The director chose a very modest format so that the stories could work on their own without big gestures and interpretations.

Five girls move slowly on stage, one from Ireland, another from the Netherlands, a third from Sweden, a fourth from Great Britain and a fifth from Ukraine. They react to Anastasiia's text, which is projected on the screen, and which they handle freely. Sometimes they accompany it with movement or singing. Otherwise it's quiet. The first segment is about courage and its unexpected shades, reflecting on what it actually means to be brave at this moment.

Get in the car on February 25 and drive? Go to the transfusion station wait in line listen to the explosions? Block the window with a wardrobe/closet and wonder if the pressure wave will topple the wardrobe on you? Watching a video with colleagues where they say they are terrorists and wondering how much they must have been tortured?

Another segment is at five o'clock in the morning, a popular time for the Russians to launch missiles into Ukraine..."

"I think about how a Russian who launches missiles at my city starts his morning... he wakes up at three, brushes his teeth, reaches for dental floss, manages to eat his ration, biscuit and apple jam from 2013 for breakfast. Then he opens the coordinates: so, today we have Zaporizhia and Kryvyi Rih... he yawns, adjusts the instruments, thinks about his daughter's birthday in the Saratov region, he would give her a bicycle, but the bicycles became more expensive because of the

sanctions... he launches rockets one after the other, then goes to cook black powder tea, watches the sunrise, thinks about how he will soon be replaced and googles the bike..."

This year I am spending Easter Monday at the cottage. I get up, brush my teeth, have oatmeal with jam from 2020 for breakfast, look at the coordinates, tomorrow we're playing in Humpolec... I google bass combo. I think how we do similar things, but the context is completely different. Someone is ringing. It's the pensioner from the neighboring cottage. Following the Czech Easter tradition, he has come to beat me up and demands a decorated Easter egg, which I, of course, don't have. A feeling of self-pity washes over me.

"Excuse me, I'm cleaning the cottage, it's just too much for me," I say. Suddenly three Gripens fly over us.

"From Čáslav," says the neighbor.

"Well, it sounds like from the Prague direction, I'd say."

"Someone clever..." says the neighbor.

"Well... I'm going to dye some eggs. Or maybe not?" I hesitate.

"You know, Eva, if you hover between 'yes' and 'no' for too long, it's more like no. Because when it's 'yes', you just know."

This performance in Archa was a clear 'yes'.

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